

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Editors' introduction

DAVID HELD AND JOHN B. THOMPSON

We live in societies which are undergoing rapid social, political and economic change. Since the advent of industrial capitalism in eighteenth-century Europe, traditional forms of life have been swept away or transformed by a continuous process of industrial and political development. The transition from the pre-industrial societies of early modern Europe to the modern industrial order is a process that preoccupied many of the social and political theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Comte, Simmel, Tönnies: these and other thinkers have left us with an array of ideas, a diverse corpus of concepts and generalizations, of philosophical assumptions and methodological precepts, which continue to animate debates within the social sciences. Some of the contributions of these earlier thinkers undoubtedly remain relevant today, but in other respects their ideas have been eclipsed both by intellectual criticism and by the course of events. In social and political theory, as in other domains of the social sciences, there is a need for the ongoing renewal and imaginative reconstruction of concepts, assumptions and approaches, in order to take into account, analyse and understand the key characteristics and developmental trends of modern societies.

Among contemporary social theorists who are preoccupied with this activity of reconstruction and renewal, Anthony Giddens stands out as a figure of major significance. Since the early 1970s he has published nearly a dozen books which have had a profound impact on debates within social theory and the social sciences generally. His writings include not only a range of texts which have become the standard commentaries on classical and contemporary social theory, but also a series of substantial volumes which present a highly original social theory and offer a powerful analysis of modern societies. It is this ambitious and innovative project which is the focal point of the chapters that make up this volume. The chapters examine some of the central themes and claims of Giddens's work, subjecting them to sustained critical scrutiny. In a lengthy rejoinder, Giddens responds to the criticisms and elaborates his views. The volume thus represents the first systematic attempt to assess one of the most important bodies of work in contemporary social theory.

There are two main strands to Giddens's constructive social theory. One of them involves the attempt to think through and resolve certain problems of a

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2

David Held and John B. Thompson

general theoretical kind. In some cases these problems have a lengthy history and have been discussed, in one form or another, since the beginnings of the social sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Giddens has reformulated them in a distinctive way and, in seeking to resolve them, he has developed an original and influential theoretical framework, the core of which is a cluster of conceptual innovations which he describes as the 'theory of structuration'. The second strand of Giddens's social theory involves the attempt to analyse the main developmental trends and institutional features of modern industrial societies. This aspect of Giddens's work draws heavily on the writings of Marx and Weber, but always in a critical way: Giddens is interested not only in the insights of these authors, but also, and perhaps more significantly, in what they failed to see. By critically appraising the work of Marx and Weber, among others, Giddens has tried to work out an account of the distinctive characteristics of 'modernity'.

Our aim in this Introduction is to provide a brief overview of Giddens's work and of some of the issues raised by his critics. We have refrained from detailed exposition of Giddens's views, not only because Giddens himself is an exceptionally lucid exponent of his own views,¹ but also because more detailed expositions can be found in each of the chapters in this volume. We shall begin by discussing Giddens's general theoretical approach, by means of which he has sought to resolve some traditional problems in social theory and to develop a coherent theoretical framework for the social sciences. In this context we shall review some of the critical arguments developed in the chapters by Bernstein, Bauman, Thompson, Gregory, Saunders and Gregson. In the second part of the Introduction we shall examine some of Giddens's more substantive contributions in which he has sought to analyse some of the structural features and developmental trends of modern societies. Here we shall consider the criticisms offered by Wright, Jessop, Shaw, Murgatroyd and Held.

I

One of the legacies of nineteenth-century social thought is that individuals working within the social sciences today are confronted with a number of deep and seemingly intractable problems of a general theoretical nature. Among these problems is the question of the relation between the social sciences and the natural sciences, a question which has elicited, and continues to elicit, strongly divergent views. On the one hand, there are those authors who take, explicitly or implicitly, the natural sciences as a methodological model for the social sciences: admired for their experimental basis and predictive success, the natural sciences are taken as the starting point for attempts to think about the character of social scientific knowledge and practice. This approach is evident not only in the work of recent philosophers of social science who are

¹ See especially his most recent volume of essays, *STMS*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

influenced by some form of positivism, but also in the writings of nineteenth-century social thinkers who shared the Enlightenment faith in progress through knowledge. On the other hand, many authors have argued that the social sciences, or 'human sciences', cannot be conceptualized in the same way as the sciences of nature. This argument has been developed in various ways and on differing grounds, from the early *Methodenstreit* in late-nineteenth-century Germany to the more recent and increasingly well-known writings of Winch, Schutz, Gadamer, Ricoeur and others.

Another problem which looms large in contemporary debates, and which overlaps partially with the question of the relation between the natural and social sciences, concerns the relation between the individual and society – or, to use more contemporary terms, the relation between 'action' and 'structure'. Here again, this problem has given rise to sharply contrasting positions. On the one hand, there are those authors who have argued that society, or social structure, is prior to the individual and serves to limit or constrain individual actions; and it is these structural features or constraints which form the proper object of analysis for the social sciences. This is a view which is widespread in the social scientific literature, from the methodological writings of Durkheim to the recent versions of structuralism (Lévi-Strauss) and structural Marxism (Althusser). On the other hand, this view has been contested or qualified by a range of thinkers who have argued that the social sciences must take account of the fact that the social world comprises, among other things, the meaningful actions, utterances and gestures of individual agents who have reasons and motives for what they do and who know, in some sense, what they are doing. This is an emphasis which is evident, for instance, in the work of Max Weber and in the writings of authors who have been influenced by the traditions of hermeneutics, phenomenology and ordinary language philosophy, among others. Each of these contrasting positions has its entrenched proponents in the contemporary theoretical landscape, which often seems like a battleground between objectivism and subjectivism, determinism and voluntarism, etc. But there are many people working in the social sciences today who think that the opposition has been overstated and that a more sophisticated account of the relevant conceptual and methodological issues would show that the social sciences can, and must, take account of both the meaningful actions of individual agents and the structural features of social contexts.

It is to the credit of Anthony Giddens that he has diagnosed these theoretical dilemmas with exceptional acuity and proposed an original and compelling way of moving beyond them. In a sequence of major works beginning with *New Rules of Sociological Method* and including *Central Problems in Social Theory* and *The Constitution of Society*, he has examined the major traditions of classical and contemporary social theory, identified their strengths and weaknesses, and drawn from them a range of lessons and ideas which inform his own constructive proposals. The centre-piece of these proposals is what he calls the 'theory of structuration'. This theory is an attempt to move beyond the apparent

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

opposition between perspectives which emphasize structure and perspectives which emphasize action; it is an attempt to think through the ways in which actions and structure are interwoven in the ongoing activity of social life. Giddens's key conceptual innovation in this regard is to argue that we should cease to conceive of 'structure' as a kind of framework, like the girders of a building or the skeleton of a body, and that we should conceptualize it instead as the 'rules and resources' which are implemented in interaction. In interacting with one another, individuals draw on the rules and resources which comprise structure, in much the same way as an individual draws on the rules of grammar in uttering a well-formed speech act. Like the rules of grammar, structure is both 'enabling' and 'constraining': it enables us to act as well as delimiting the courses of possible action. By focusing on the generative character of rules and resources, we can see that structure is both constitutive of everyday action and, at the same time, reproduced by that action – a phenomenon that Giddens refers to as the 'duality of structure'.

From this perspective it can be argued that individuals know a great deal about the structural features of the social world of which they are part, just as the speakers of a language know the rules of that language, even if they cannot formulate them discursively. But the accounts that agents are able to give of their own action, and of the structural features of the social world more generally, are limited or 'bounded' in various ways, and it is part of the task of the social sciences to examine the aspects and processes of the social world which lie beyond the immediate grasp of the agents implicated in them. Here Giddens rejects the views of philosophers of social science such as Winch, who argue that there is no room in the social sciences for objectivistic concepts like 'cause'.² But Giddens agrees with Winch, and with authors in the traditions of hermeneutics and interpretative sociology, on one key point: that the social sciences stand in a unique and 'reflexive' relation to their subject matter. For the social sciences are not alone in seeking to analyse the social world and interpret action: these are activities which are also carried out routinely by the individuals who make up the social world. Unlike the natural sciences, the social sciences are characterized by a 'double hermeneutic'. The results of the social sciences are in principle available to the individuals who comprise the social world, and are also potentially critical of the beliefs, concepts and action frameworks of lay members.

The theory of structuration forms the linch-pin of what has become an elaborate and ramified theoretical system. Giddens has refined the concepts of action and structure and linked them to an ever-widening circle of related notions. At the same time, he has sought to employ these concepts in analysing a wide range of substantive issues. Giddens's theoretical approach and substantive analyses are increasingly becoming topics of debate in their own right. In this volume, the chapters by Bernstein, Bauman, Thompson, Gregory,

² See Peter Winch, *The Idea of Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), and Giddens's critique of Winch in *NRSM*, pp. 44–51.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Saunders and Gregson address some of the key questions raised by Giddens's general approach. Richard Bernstein is concerned with the question of how, on Giddens's account, we are to understand the *critical* character of social theory and social science. Giddens maintains that the social sciences should be regarded as intrinsically critical disciplines, but how are we to understand the nature of such critique and the grounds for its justification? Bernstein carefully disentangles some of the relevant issues and argues forcefully that, on the key questions, Giddens is rather evasive: 'in tracking down what Giddens means by critique and critical theory', comments Bernstein, 'we discover not only ambiguity and vagueness, but conflicting and even contradictory claims'.³ It is clear that Giddens's views on these issues, however elusive they may be, differ significantly from those of another major social theorist to whom Bernstein alludes – Jürgen Habermas. Over the last decade Habermas has been particularly concerned to examine the nature of social critique and to develop a framework for the justification or 'grounding' of normative judgements.⁴ Habermas's proposals have proved to be highly controversial and have won few unqualified endorsements. But Bernstein is of the opinion that, whatever difficulties there may be in the details of Habermas's account, it has the merit of confronting directly a series of questions which cannot be avoided by authors who espouse, as Giddens appears to do, a strong version of the thesis of social theory as critique.

Responding constructively to Bernstein's charge, Giddens distinguishes between four levels of critique, all of which are implied, to some extent, by the conduct of social science. He describes these levels as intellectual critique, practical critique, ideological critique and moral critique; and he construes Bernstein's charge as pertaining primarily to the fourth level, that of moral critique. Giddens argues that the practising social scientist can legitimately make moral criticisms of states of affairs, and that such criticisms can be justified only by a form of argument which fuses together factual and evaluative claims. This position, which Giddens describes as 'contingent moral rationalism', differs significantly from the position developed by Habermas, for Giddens does not share Habermas's strong assumptions concerning the possibility of attaining consensus among participants of a debate. But Giddens's position also differs from that of social theorists and philosophers who are inclined to adopt some kind of relativistic or nihilistic approach – an inclination which is evident in the work of many contemporary French theorists, including Michel Foucault. For Giddens's view is that moral critique stands in need of rational justification, even if, in particular cases, such justification may not be altogether conclusive.

The chapters by Bauman and Thompson focus the debate more sharply on

³ Richard J. Bernstein, 'Social Theory as Critique', Ch. 1 in this volume, p. 28.

⁴ See especially Jürgen Habermas, 'What is Universal Pragmatics?', in his *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1979), pp. 1–68; and Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and Rationalization of Society*, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

the theory of structuration as such. Zygmunt Bauman offers an elegant account of the theoretical background to Giddens's project. The theory of structuration, observes Bauman, has a dual purpose: to dethrone the concept of structure as an external determinant of action, and to deny the random character of human action. But in redefining the concept of structure in terms of rules and resources, Giddens merely reinstitutes, Bauman argues, an outer force which determines action without being determined by it, an outer force which seems more elusive and mysterious than ever. Giddens is guilty, in Bauman's view, of a kind of 'hypostasis' – that is, of turning a social pattern or distribution into some sort of process or thing. In its most elementary sense, 'structure' refers to the fact that some actions or events are more likely to occur than others. The problem arises when social theorists then try to *explain* the non-randomness of social life by postulating a structure, or a process of structuration, which underlies it. Structure and structuration are 'metaphysical props', as Bauman puts it, to account for the uneven distribution of probabilities in social life. Moreover, Giddens's emphasis on the actor, whose actions are said to be structured by rules and resources, is questionable as a focal point for social theory and sociological analysis. In seeking to recover the actor as a knowledgeable agent, Giddens has perhaps gone too far and has lost sight of the network of interdependencies in which actors are always and already enmeshed. Bauman suggests that Giddens's approach might best be replaced by something similar to Elias's 'figural sociology', since the latter salvages the elementary idea of structure as regularity and focuses primarily on networks of interaction and interdependency.

John Thompson concentrates on Giddens's proposal to reconceptualize structure in terms of rules and resources, examining the development of this proposal in Giddens's writings and assessing its cogency and coherence. Like Bauman, Thompson casts doubt on the suitability of this proposal as a means of approaching issues concerned with the structural features of social life. It is by no means clear, for instance, how the proposal could illuminate, or indeed be connected to, the analysis of differential practices or opportunities, such as differential access to institutions of higher education. Moreover, the key term in Giddens's proposed reconceptualization – the notion of rule – is itself rather vague. There are many different kinds of rules which operate in social life, including traffic rules, bureaucratic rules, rules of thumb, rules of etiquette, rules of grammar, rules of football and so on. In describing such rules, are we describing the 'structure' of social life, as Giddens maintains, or are we diverting our attention away from a range of structural features that cannot be adequately analysed in terms of rules? In his recent writings Giddens has introduced more abstract levels of structural analysis and speaks of 'structural principles', 'structural sets', etc.; but what remains unclear, Thompson argues, is just how these more abstract levels of analysis can be reconciled with Giddens's proposal to conceive of structure in terms of rules and resources. Are structural principles some sort of rules, or has Giddens implicitly put aside his

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

original conception? The main source of these problems, Thompson suggests, is that Giddens initially worked out his general conception of structure by reflecting on the nature of language and its relation to speech. Although Giddens never uses the linguistic example in an unqualified way, it is nevertheless clear that his proposed reconceptualization of structure owes a great deal to what philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Austin, as well as some authors writing within the tradition of structural linguistics (Saussure, Benveniste, Derrida), have had to say about the nature and function of language.

In reply to Bauman and Thompson, Giddens defends his approach and argues that their reservations can be met without altering the basic elements of his account. He offers several examples of rules and rule-following behaviour, and he tries to show how his conceptual framework can be connected to some of the more traditional problems of sociological analysis, such as differential access to educational institutions. Particularly important in this regard is the distinction which Giddens has drawn, and which he reiterates here, between 'structure' and 'system': whereas the former term refers to rules and resources, the latter refers to the patterning of social relationships across time and space. Many of the objections and counter-examples offered by Bauman and Thompson appear to Giddens to have more to do with what he would call systems and system reproduction than with what he regards as the proper domain of structure. As regards his use of the linguistic analogy, Giddens is, as he puts it, 'unrepentant'. In drawing on the linguistic example, his main concern, he explains, has always been to highlight the 'recursive character' of social life – that is, the fact that structure is reproduced in and through the succession of situated practices which are organized by it. He would not wish to push the comparison beyond this point. Whether, in drawing on this example, Giddens has succeeded in formulating a conception of structure which is coherent, illuminating and compelling is the issue that is at stake in this debate.

One of the most interesting and fruitful aspects of Giddens's theory of structuration is the way in which he has conjoined it with the analysis of time and space. Giddens has perhaps done more than anyone to show that an account of time and space is essential to social theory, and that such an account can provide a tool for analysing some of the most important features of social life. Rather than thinking of time and space as abstract categories or as frameworks within which action takes place, they can be more illuminatingly thought of, Giddens suggests, in terms of 'presence' and 'absence' – terms which he borrows from Heidegger. Every interaction involves different forms of presence and absence. A face-to-face interaction typically takes place in a definite setting and endures for a definite period; the other person is 'present' both spatially and temporally. But social systems can become 'extended' in space and time, in such a way that the other is no longer immediately present. This time-space distancing (or 'distanciation', as Giddens generally calls it) has been facilitated by the development of new forms of transport and communication. The significance of the invention of the telegraph, to take one

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

example, was that it separated the process of communication from the physical transportation of messages, thereby enabling individuals to communicate quickly at a distance, without sharing a common physical locale. Giddens draws on the work of 'time-space geographers', such as Hägerstrand, in order to analyse in further detail the spatial and temporal characteristics of social systems. He shows how transformations in these characteristics are connected more generally with the generation of power and with the growing capacity of nation-states to store information about their populations, and thereby to monitor and control their activities.

Geographers, in turn, have taken up Giddens's work and engaged with it in a critical and creative fashion. In this volume the chapters by Gregory and Saunders exemplify this critical engagement. Derek Gregory provides a systematic and insightful account of the ways in which time-space relations are integrated into the theory of structuration. Writing from the viewpoint of human geography, Gregory compares Giddens's work with that of authors such as David Harvey, Manuel Castells and Henri Lefebvre, authors who are perhaps better known among geographers than they are within social theory. Viewed from this perspective, Giddens's work falls short, Gregory argues, on two counts: first, Giddens's conception of space in terms of presence and absence does not take account of what Harvey, Lefebvre and others call the 'production of space', including both the production of material spatial structures and the production of representations of space. Second, Giddens's account of time-space distancing places too much emphasis on power and domination, and thereby downplays the significance of the symbolic and normative aspects of space and spatial representation, such as those involved in the codification of space through the production and reading of maps.

The issues raised by Gregory overlap to some extent with the criticisms developed by Peter Saunders, who assesses Giddens's work from the perspective of urban sociology. Saunders highlights the significance of time-space relations in Giddens's account of the development and distinctive characteristics of modern societies. As social systems are increasingly 'stretched' across time and space, the link between social activity and spatial location becomes ever more tenuous, and space itself becomes commodified and constructed – the 'created environment' of urban space in which most people in modern societies live out most of their lives. At the same time, the traditions and routines which provided individuals with a sense of 'ontological security' – that is, with a sense of confidence or trust that the world is as it appears to be – are transformed, and to some extent undermined, by the rapidly changing character of modern societies. Saunders expresses some scepticism about this thesis of the fragile character of ontological security in the modern world. Life in modern societies is also routinized, even if the routines are different and the environment through which we move is more created than natural. 'Why', Saunders pointedly asks, 'should people feel a deep sense of desperation, fatalism, meaninglessness or whatever when they go to work every morning on

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-27855-3 - Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics

Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

the same train, but not when in the past they walked to the fields every morning along the same footpath?⁵ Saunders finds no good reason to suppose that a natural environment is supportive of ontological security while a created one disturbs it, and he detects a certain nostalgic romanticism in Giddens's suggestion that in pre-modern societies human beings lived in a symbiotic relation with the natural world.

In response to these and other criticisms by Gregory and Saunders, Giddens clarifies his approach to the study of time and space and elaborates his account of ontological security in the modern world. While ontological security is based on certain general psychological needs, its relation to everyday routines can be shown, Giddens argues, to differ systematically between non-modern and modern societies. In non-modern societies the kinship systems and the locality served as grounding for the maintenance of routines, but in modern societies this is no longer the case. In the latter, new trust mechanisms are employed as a means of securing confidence in transactions between individuals dispersed in time and space. These mechanisms include abstract tokens such as money, as well as 'expert systems' which secure confidence by invoking professional expertise. But the ontological security established by such mechanisms is, Giddens suggests, of a rather tenuous nature, and has to be 'actively regrounded' by constantly building and renewing personal ties with others. The insecurity we experience is exacerbated by the existence of risks and dangers which derive, not so much from natural hazards like floods or droughts, but rather from the socially created environment and from the failure of the very mechanisms through which our confidence is supposed to be secured. These are some of the issues that Giddens plans to explore in his new book, *The Consequences of Modernity*.⁶

Although the theory of structuration, and Giddens's related work on time and space, have generated considerable theoretical debate, they have received a more cautious response from social scientists engaged in empirical research. For there are many who feel that Giddens's work, however interesting it may be on a general theoretical level, is too abstract and formal to be of much use in carrying out empirical research projects. This sentiment, which is evident in several of the contributions to this volume, is forcefully articulated by Nicky Gregson. She points out that Giddens has often stressed the importance of developing links between social theory and empirical research, but, until recently, Giddens has said relatively little on just how such links are to be developed. This virtual silence was broken with the publication of *The Constitution of Society*, a lengthy chapter of which was devoted to the question of the relation between structuration theory and empirical research.⁷ Gregson examines in some detail the arguments and examples deployed in this chapter. She maintains that, despite Giddens's claims to the contrary, his discussion in *The*

⁵ Peter Saunders, 'Space, Urbanism and the Created Environment', Ch. 10 in this volume, p. 225.

⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

⁷ See CS, Ch. 6.

Constitution of Society does little to demonstrate the relevance or usefulness of structuration theory for empirical research. Structuration theory is best seen, she argues, as a 'second order theory', concerned primarily with conceptualizing the general constituents of society (structure, agency, time, space, etc.), and as such is quite different from 'first order theory' which is more directly concerned with analysing and explaining the specific events or contingencies of particular periods or places.

Giddens does not accept Gregson's conclusion that structuration theory is of little value for empirical research and tries to show, in response to her chapter, that empirical research can be directly informed by the structurationist approach. Focusing on the example of marital relationships, he considers how structuration theory could sensitize the researcher to certain aspects of this phenomenon, such as the ways in which marital relationships are maintained through day-to-day and periodic activities. Here, as in other domains of social life, 'structure' is embedded in practice, that is, in the countless and seemingly trivial activities which make up everyday life. These localized forms of practice can be linked to broader aspects of social systems by examining the ways in which considerations of a more general kind, such as gender divisions and labour markets, enter into the situated practices of particular agents. By considering an example like this, we can see, Giddens argues, that structuration theory directs our attention to certain aspects of the social world and helps us to analyse particular phenomena in certain ways – it serves as a kind of 'operational principle of research'. It also reminds us that the results of such research may have an impact on the very phenomena under investigation, by being incorporated, via the double hermeneutic, in the self-understanding of the individuals who make up the social world. But structuration theory can also be seen to have empirical relevance in a rather different way: it can be developed in relation to a broad range of substantive issues which have been of central concern to Giddens, from the analysis of class relations and the state to the reconstruction of the institutional aspects of modern societies.

II

Many of the writings of the major social and political thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were concerned with trying to understand the nature and distinctiveness of the new industrial order which was emerging in Europe and rapidly spreading to other parts of the world. This new social order seemed to be intrinsically dynamic and self-propelling; the traditional ways of life characteristic of medieval and early modern Europe were being progressively undermined, as individuals were swept off the land and drawn into the new factories and communities of the expanding urban centres. The emergent social order gave rise, in turn, to new problems, as well as to new opportunities for progress and social change. The writings of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel and others could be seen, to some extent, as attempts to