

Robert K Merton Social Theory And Social Structure

Late one afternoon in the fall of 1976, we were sipping Sanka and speculating on the possible directions towards which research and theory in organizational science might lead. One of us had just re-read Walter Nord's Marxist critique of Human Resource Management, and the discussion evolved into an enumeration of the many articles that had appeared in the recent literature attacking the discipline, its mission, and its methods. In no time the list was long enough to suggest that a number of scholars, both young and established, were dissatisfied with the rate of progress begin made in the accumulation of knowledge about organizations. The critics we identified were located at many different schools, and they were associated with diverse research traditions and biases. The causes they identified as underlying the problems they cited varied, as did the solutions they offered. We decided to pursue these polemics with a view to seeking commonalities among them, hoping that if there were any dominant common themes, it might be possible to anticipate the directions the field could take. Our reading and thinking led us to the conclusion that many of the issues being raised by the critics of the discipline could be seen as disagreements over

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some implicit (or ignored) metaphysical and epistemological assumptions about organizations. We hypothesized that much of the controversy resulted from a lack of consensus regarding what organizations are and how knowledge about them can be developed.

Examines the interactions between sociological theory and research in various approaches to the study of social structure, evaluating the limitations and functions of each

Social Theory and Social Structure
Simon and Schuster

Analytical sociology is a strategy for understanding the social world. It is concerned with explaining important social facts such as network structures, patterns of residential segregation, typical beliefs, cultural tastes, and common ways of acting. It explains such facts by detailing in clear and precise ways the mechanisms through which the social facts were brought about. Making sense of the relationship between micro and macro thus is one of the central concerns of analytical sociology. The approach is a contemporary incarnation of Robert K. Merton's notion of middle-range theory and presents a vision of sociological theory as a tool-box of semi-general theories each of which is adequate for explaining certain types of phenomena. The Handbook brings together some of the most prominent sociologists in the world. Some of the

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chapters focus on action and interaction as the cogs and wheels of social processes, while others consider the dynamic social processes that these actions and interactions bring about.

Containing the most systematic statement of the theoretical foundations and framework of functional sociology, the essays included in this edition provide an authoritative approach to the functional analysis of social structures. Featuring two new chapters that form an introduction to the three essays publishing in part one of *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Robert K. Merton reflects on some of the most important thinking in contemporary sociology. *On Theoretical Sociology* presents a clear and precise overview of basic concepts and serves as an introduction to the unique intellectual achievements of one of America's foremost scholars.

Written and compiled by friends and former students, *The Idea of Social Structure* honors Robert K.

Merton, considered one of the premier sociologists of the twentieth century. Along with Talcott Parsons and Marion J. Levy, Merton was emphatic in his use of the term "social structure"—however different they were in defining and refining the term. The chapters in this volume address many of Merton's diverse sociological theories and, in turn, his theories' impact upon a very large sociological territory. The volume includes major statements on the context of working with Merton by Lewis A. Coser, Paul F. Lazarsfeld,

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Robert A. Nisbet, and Seymour Martin Lipset, as well as memorable statements covering Merton's interests in the sociology of knowledge and science, planning communities, medical education, relative deprivation, everyday life, political roles, and communication media. This is a powerful sourcebook for understanding the work of Merton and of his intellectual successors. Nisbet called the decade of the 1930s among the most vital and creative periods in American history. It was certainly a period of intense struggle—political, military, and ideological. But the formation of modern sociology was without question one of the crowning achievements in the scientific evolution of the century. The volume is sharply focused on Merton's work and deeply appreciative of the nature of his contribution. It is a landmark effort in the study of sociology as history.

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index. The old saying does often seem to hold true: the rich get richer while the poor get poorer, creating a widening gap between those who have more and those who have less. The sociologist Robert K. Merton called this phenomenon the Matthew effect, named after a passage in the gospel of Matthew. Yet the more closely we examine the sociological effects of this principle, the more complicated the idea becomes. Initial advantage doesn't always lead to further advantage, and disadvantage doesn't

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necessarily translate into failure. Does this theory need to be revisited? Merton's arguments have significant implications for our conceptions of equality and justice, and they challenge our beliefs about culture, education, and public policy. His hypothesis has been examined across a variety of social arenas, including science, technology, politics, and schooling, to see if, in fact, advantage begets further advantage. Daniel Rigney is the first to evaluate Merton's theory of cumulative advantage extensively, considering both the conditions that uphold the Matthew effect and the circumstances that cause it to fail. He explores whether growing inequality is beyond human control or disparity is socially constructed and subject to change.

Reexamining our core assumptions about society, Rigney causes us to rethink the sources of inequity. This book reintroduces the work of Robert K. Merton as a bridge between classical sociology and modern sociology. Founded in the sociological classics but developing a modern approach to the advancement of theory and research methodology, Merton's thought helped to construct modern sociology in its coverage of many of the social institutional areas of contemporary society. Recovering and analysing the system of 'structural analysis', which Merton progressively developed – a system largely overlooked due to the tendency among commentators to stereotype him as a 'functionalist'

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– the author considers the applications of this approach to various substantive fields, particularly science and criminal justice, and examines the effect of Merton's later 'sociological semantics' on his overall schema. A clear and accessible presentation of the array of concepts introduced by Merton to sociology, Reintroducing Robert K. Merton will appeal to scholars and students with interests in sociological theory, social research, the history of sociology and the various substantive areas covered in the work of Merton – deviance, science, and communications.

Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) was one of the most influential sociologists of the twentieth century, producing clear theories and innovative research that continue to shape multiple disciplines. Merton's reach can be felt in the study of social structure, social psychology, deviance, professions, organizations, culture, and science. Yet for all his fame, Merton is only partially understood. He is treated by scholars as a functional analyst, when in truth his contributions transcend paradigm.

Gathering together twelve major sociologists, Craig Calhoun launches a thorough reconsideration of Merton's achievements and inspires a renewed engagement with sociological theory. Merton's work addressed the challenges of integrating research and theory. It connected different fields of empirical research and spoke to the importance of overcoming

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divisions between allegedly pure and applied sociology. Merton also sought to integrate sociology with the institutional analysis of science, each informing the other. By bringing together different aspects of his work in one volume, Calhoun illuminates the interdisciplinary and unifying dimensions of Merton's approach, while also advancing the intellectual agenda of an increasingly vital area of study. Contributors: Aaron L. Panofsky, University of California; Alan Sica, Pennsylvania State University; Alejandro Portes, Princeton University; Charles Camic, Northwestern University; Charles Tilly, Columbia University; Craig Calhoun, Social Science Research Council and New York University; Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, City University of New York; Harriet Zuckerman, Mellon Foundation; Peter Simonson, University of Colorado; Ragnvald Kalleberg, University of Oslo; Robert J. Sampson, Harvard University; Thomas F. Gieryn, Indiana University; Viviana A. Zelizer, Princeton University

Sport and Modern Social Theorists is an innovative and exciting new collection. The chapters are written by leading social analysts of sport from across the world, and examine the contributions of major social theorists towards our critical understanding of modern sport. Social theorists under critical examination include Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Adorno, Gramsci, Habermas, Merton, C.Wright Mills, Goffman, Giddens, Elias, Bourdieu and Foucault.

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This book will appeal to students and scholars of sport studies, cultural studies, modern social theory, and to social scientists generally.

In this fundamental contribution to the study and application of sociological theory, Wallace examines a wide range of theories within a framework that clarifies their interrelationships and illustrates their implications for empirical research. Wallace is able to point out the symbiotic relationships among these theories which, at first, may appear to be in direct opposition--or at least discord. Sociological Theory begins with an original essay by the editor that introduces the reader to eleven general theoretical viewpoints. He calls these ecologism, demographism, materialism, psychologism, technologism, functional structuralism, exchange structuralism, conflict structuralism, symbolic interactionism, social actionism, and functional imperativism. To do this, Wallace assembles selected readings by major theorists that provide detailed examples of each of the theoretical viewpoints discussed. The selections are keyed to the framework developed in the Introduction, so as to enable the reader to work back and forth between the general and the particular statements. Offering far more than a mere survey or an abstract critical analysis, In this way, Sociological Theory provides a learning matrix that facilitates comprehension and enables the reader systematically to expand his

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knowledge of sociological theory. In developing his analytical framework, Wallace points out how these different types of theory complement rather than conflict with one another. Through this approach, he is able to show the distinctive level and scope of analysis of each theory to demonstrate why the sociologist must draw upon and integrate several viewpoints for interpreting research results and formulating hypotheses. A useful guide and reference work for researchers and teachers, the book is an excellent basic or supplementary text for all theory courses. As Robert K. Merton noted at the time of the original publication, "Sociological Theory is a bea

"The exploration of the social conditions that facilitate or retard the search for scientific knowledge has been the major theme of Robert K. Merton's work for forty years. This collection of papers [is] a fascinating overview of this sustained inquiry. . . . There are very few other books in sociology . . . with such meticulous scholarship, or so elegant a style. This collection of papers is, and is likely to remain for a long time, one of the most important books in sociology."—Joseph Ben-David, *New York Times Book Review* "The novelty of the approach, the erudition and elegance, and the unusual breadth of vision make this volume one of the most important contributions to sociology in general and to the sociology of science in particular. . . . Merton's

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Sociology of Science is a magisterial summary of the field."—Yehuda Elkana, *American Journal of Sociology* "Merton's work provides a rich feast for any scientist concerned for a genuine understanding of his own professional self. And Merton's industry, integrity, and humility are permanent witnesses to that ethos which he has done so much to define and support."—J. R. Ravetz, *American Scientist* "The essays not only exhibit a diverse and penetrating analysis and a deal of historical and contemporary examples, with concrete numerical data, but also make genuinely good reading because of the wit, the liveliness and the rich learning with which Merton writes."—Philip Morrison, *Scientific American* "Merton's impact on sociology as a whole has been large, and his impact on the sociology of science has been so momentous that the title of the book is apt, because Merton's writings represent modern sociology of science more than any other single writer."—Richard McClintock, *Contemporary Sociology*

This sixth volume of *Advances in Criminological Theory* is testimony to a resurgent interest in anomie-strain theory, which began in the mid- 1980s and continues unabated. Contributors focus on the new body of empirical research and theorizing that has been added to the anomie tradition that extends from Durkheim to Merton. The first section is a major, 75-page statement by Robert K. Merton, examining

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the development of the anomie-and-opportunity-structure paradigm and its significance to criminology., The Legacy of Anomie Theory assesses the theory's continuing usefulness, explains the relevance of Merton's concept of goals/means disparity as a psychological mechanism in the explanation of delinquency, and compares strain theory with social control theory. A macrosociological theoretical formulation is used to explain the association between societal development and crime rates. In other chapters, anomie is used to explain white-collar crime and to explore the symbiotic relationship between Chinese gangs and adult criminal organizations within the cultural, economic, and political context of the American-Chinese community.

With playfulness and a large dose of wit, Robert Merton traces the origin of Newton's aphorism, "If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Using as a model the discursive and digressive style of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Merton presents a whimsical yet scholarly work which deals with the questions of creativity, tradition, plagiarism, the transmission of knowledge, and the concept of progress. "This book is the delightful apotheosis of donmanship: Merton parodies scholarliness while being faultlessly scholarly; he scourges pedantry while brandishing his own abstruse learning on every page. The most recondite and obscure scholarly

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squabbles are transmuted into the material of comedy as the ostensible subject is shouldered to one side by yet another hobby horse from Merton's densely populated stable. He has created a jeu d'esprit which is profoundly suggestive both in detail and as a whole."—Sean French, Times Literary Supplement

Robert K. Merton is unarguably one of the most influential sociologists of his time. A figure whose wide-ranging theoretical and methodological contributions have become fundamental to the field, Merton is best known for introducing such concepts and procedures as unanticipated consequences, self-fulfilling prophecies, focused group interviews, middle-range theory, opportunity structure, and analytic paradigms. This definitive compilation encompasses the breadth and brilliance of his works, from the earliest to the most recent. Merton's foundational writings on social structure and process, on the sociology of science and knowledge, and on the discipline and trajectory of sociology itself are all powerfully represented, as are his autobiographical insights in a fascinating coda. Anchored by Piotr Sztompka's contextualizing introduction, Merton's vast oeuvre emerges as a dynamic and profoundly coherent system of thought, a constant source of vitality and renewal for present and future sociology.

This volume offers scholars of sociology and allied areas the fruits of an international conference on the contributions of the eminent Robert K. Merton. The assessment, as good in content as well as in participants, took place in Amalfi, Italy, with the participation of Merton himself and under the auspices of the Italian Sociology Association. Carlo Mongardini aptly summarizes the unique impact of Merton on

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the social theory of our century. "His strength as a classic writer lies in his balance, unveiling complexity, and in his humanism which looks beyond the apparent simplicity and coherence of social reality." A special treat is the final chapter by Merton reviewing "Unanticipated Consequences and Kindred Sociological Ideas." In it, he ranges from the historical antecedents of the concept to his own evolution in the use and expansion of the idea. Merton approaches the development of his thought as installments rather than simple evolution, and in so doing gives us unique insight into how he built upon his originating notions in the context of social science as it existed in the United States. Tensions between integrating scholarship and reaching the general public provide a special insight into Merton that might prove new even to those who know his work well. Contributors to this original volume include: Volker Meja, Nico Stehr, Paolo Ammassari, Gianni Statera, Birgitta Nedelmann, Harriet Zuckerman, Piotr Sztompka, Peter Gerlich, Charles Crothers, Elena Besozzi, and Arnold Zonglerle, among others. The chapters address the full range of Merton's work, with special emphasis on such areas as anomie, structural analysis, the relationship of theory to research, patterns of latent and manifest influence, and even the application of Mertonian concepts to the analysis of Merton as a scholar. This unusual compendium, translated from the Italian, will interest social researchers across the academic spectrum.

The classic work that redefined the sociology of knowledge and has inspired a generation of philosophers and thinkers In this seminal book, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann examine how knowledge forms and how it is preserved and altered within a society. Unlike earlier theorists and philosophers, Berger and Luckmann go beyond intellectual history and focus on commonsense, everyday knowledge—the proverbs, morals, values, and beliefs shared among ordinary

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people. When first published in 1966, this systematic, theoretical treatise introduced the term social construction, effectively creating a new thought and transforming Western philosophy.

Theory in Action starts by detailing how social theory is commonly understood, practiced and abused. It follows by proposing alternative ideas of the active and knowledge-generative use of social theory, and demonstrates, by providing examples, a variety of theoretical operations.

"Originally published in 1963 by The Free Press of Glencoe."

This title provides managers, executives and other professionals with an innovative method for critical decision-making. The book explains the reasons for decision failures using the Law of Unintended Consequences. This account draws on the work of sociologist Robert K. Merton, psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, and economist Herbert Simon to identify two primary causes?: cognitive biases and bounded rationality. It introduces an innovative method for "test driving" decisions that addresses both causes by combining scenario planning and "what-if" simulations. This method enables professionals to learn safely from virtual mistakes rather than real ones. It also provides four sample test drives of realistic critical decisions as well as two instructional videos to illustrate this new method. This book provides leaders and their support teams with important new tools for analyzing and refining complex decisions that are critical to organizational well-being and survival.

From the names of cruise lines and bookstores to an Australian ranch and a nudist camp outside of Atlanta, the word serendipity--that happy blend of wisdom and

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luck by which something is discovered not quite by accident--is today ubiquitous. This book traces the word's eventful history from its 1754 coinage into the twentieth century--chronicling along the way much of what we now call the natural and social sciences. The book charts where the term went, with whom it resided, and how it fared. We cross oceans and academic specialties and meet those people, both famous and now obscure, who have used and abused serendipity. We encounter a linguistic sage, walk down the illustrious halls of the Harvard Medical School, attend the (serendipitous) birth of penicillin, and meet someone who "manages serendipity" for the U.S. Navy. The story of serendipity is fascinating; that of *The Travels and Adventures of Serendipity*, equally so. Written in the 1950s by already-eminant sociologist Robert Merton and Elinor Barber, the book--though occasionally and most tantalizingly cited--was intentionally never published. This is all the more curious because it so remarkably anticipated subsequent battles over research and funding--many of which centered on the role of serendipity in science. Finally, shortly after his ninety-first birthday, following Barber's death and preceding his own by but a little, Merton agreed to expand and publish this major work. Beautifully written, the book is permeated by the prodigious intellectual curiosity and generosity that characterized Merton's influential *On the Shoulders of Giants*. Absolutely entertaining as the history of a word, the book is also tremendously important to all who value the miracle of intellectual discovery. It represents Merton's lifelong protest against that rhetoric of science

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that defines discovery as anything other than a messy blend of inspiration, perspiration, error, and happy chance--anything other than serendipity.

American Sociological Theory: A Critical History discusses the history of American sociological theory by providing a selective and critical account of ten writers largely involved in the subject. Chapters 1 to 10 of this book are devoted to the contributions and investigations of ten acclaimed sociological theorists— William Graham Sumner, Lester Frank Ward, Charles Horton Cooley, Edward Alsworth Ross, Florian Znaniecki, Robert Morrison MacIver, Pitirim A. Sorokin, George A. Lundberg, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton. The sociological label, legacy of Spencer, normative taboo, American references, and the "Holy Trinity" (Marx, Durkheim, and Weber) are also elaborated in this text. This publication is a good reference for students and researchers conducting work on general sociological theory.

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