

Good essay about sociological theories

[Society](#)



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Sociologists have proposed various theories that explain the social organization and the socialization of the people in the community. These concepts attempt to explain people's habits and situation under which they develop their behaviors and lifestyles. Understanding the concepts and arguments proposed by these theories is essential to apply them accordingly in addressing social dilemmas in the community. The paper reviews two social concepts— the Habitus and Rationalization by discussing each model, comparing and contrasting them while critiquing the arguments that they make.

Rationalization

Rationalization is a major sociological concept that seeks to explain why different people behave differently within their social groups. Besides, rationalization looks into the ways the social life has changed over time. Max Weber is the brain behind this concept as he sought to make people understand how it is to be in another person's position. With his Verstehen, Weber calls on people to get into the social groups to understand them better. Such social advances like use of technology cannot be understood by the people living in the 18th century. In this regard, Weber argues that the

western society has made great shifts from a tradition of mysteries to a rational one where science and technology are the answers to all problems. Therefore, rationalization involves replacing the ancient and emotional way of thinking with practicality and reason (Calhoun, 2009).

The increased rationalization in the modern society is responsible for the advancement in economy, societies and in every aspect of life. To Weber, rationalization has given birth to bureaucracy that is the formalized and organized structure of society. However, Weber was not blind to the negative consequences of rationalization. The iron cage is the organized social order that in the end traps humanity within an invisible prison. When rationalization is embraced in the society, people tend to have minimal freedom, potential and expression (Calhoun, 2009).

Habitus

Another concept that will be analyzed in this paper is habitus by Pierre Bourdieu—the paper dwells on this sociologist and tries to explain how valuable the concepts are in the social life. Bourdieu being one of the greatest sociologists in the 19th century came up with a major concept of habitus. To Bourdieu, reality is viewed as a social concept as existing is not an entity on its own. One has to exist in relation to the society and this way; reality is viewed from the perspective of the society (Dillon, 2014).

Bourdieu argues that although habitus has great influence on an individual, it does not inhibit one's thoughts and everyone is free to choose his/her actions and thoughts. With the proper reflection, an individual can become aware of his/her habitus and realize the direction that he/she can follow to excel in life. In this manner, everyone can view the society with the correct

perspective and relative objectivity. Reflecting on one's habitus is an important task that has given rise to the discourse that all things are interdependent and nothing is separate from the other. To make field theory comprehensible, Bourdieu breaks down the species capital into 4 categories namely; economic capital, symbolic capital, cultural capital and social capital (Dillon, 2014).

Both economic and cultural capital is linked to education where the middle class are the most beneficiaries of institutions of higher learning. The reason why learned parents send their children to universities is because they are knowledgeable of what happens there and they have the economic capability to do so, and these people belong to the middle classes. The working class with their ignorance of the social aspect of universities rarely sends their children there; in any case they lack the economic power to do it (Dillon, 2014).

According to Bourdieu society is divided into action spheres that he calls fields (Bourdieu, 1990). There is power relations within these spheres and the leaders are termed as agents of power. He has made great contribution in understanding the society and making his argument that no individual can live separately from the whole justifiable. His concepts about the social field as well as habitus have influenced sociological analysts on contemporary society. Bourdieu uses the intrinsic happenings of an individual to research how people relate within a society. Besides, people cannot transcend their habitus and Bourdieu's thoughts have influenced the contemporary society in major manner. May it be in universities, in politics, hospitals or religion, the field theory is applicable in making people understand the influence of the society on an individual (Dillon, 2014).

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Both Rationalization and Habitus models emphasize the idea of social construction, although from different viewpoints. Weber argues that one can hardly understand the behavior of a particular group if he/she fails to think of their situation from their perspective (Calhoun, 2012). This is because the social aspects such as culture, people's beliefs and way of life have the potential of influencing one's way of thinking or habit. The sentiment is similar to the scenario that Bourdieu described as habitus which regards as a social construction model that influences people's practices and the way actions are perceived (Bourdieu, 1990). The habitus that Bourdieu is referring to may be seen as the environment that a particular group grows in—the socialization (ground) that Weber challenges one to identify with to be in a position of comprehending the habit of the intended people. However, in contrast to the Weber's concept, Bourdieu goes further behold the general effect of the social environment proposed by the rationalization concept. Bourdieu fragments the society further to account for the effect of what he calls “fields” on the people's habit. Accordingly, the Habitus concept clearly shows the social effects of aspects such as one's education, class and status among others in relation to his or her behavior.

Although the Habitus and Rationalization concepts have richly informed the field of the Sociology, the theories can be questioned on various grounds. For example, the Habitus model fails to provide a precise argument that can precisely explain the actual resources linked with the higher-class field that defines cultural capital. Furthermore, the theory is inadequate in explaining the process through which such resources are transformed into educational credentials. Similarly, the concept of Rationalization presents a weakness where Weber remains insensitive to the idea of free will and independent

thinking as clearly explained by Bourdieu. However, Weber's idea presents rational theoretical 'advance' through explaining a practical procedure in which knowledge is utilized to attain the desired goals. The concept promotes efficiency, organization and management of both the social and physical environment.

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