

## abortion as a social problem

Abortion has been legal in the USA and in almost all western European countries since the early 1970s, and in Belgium and Ireland since the early 1990s. Although abortion was legal in the Soviet Union for several years prior to its collapse, abortion politics have subsequently come to the fore in some Eastern European countries (e.g., Poland) as a result of government attempts at scaling-back abortion. Legal access to abortion continues to be highly restricted in Mexico and in several Central and South American countries. Abortion is most intensely debated in the USA, where legal and congressional initiatives to amend the US Supreme Court's recognition (*Roe v. Wade*, 1973) of a woman's legal right to an abortion continue unabated. Abortion activism is pursued by several religious and secular organizations, and abortion politics dominate presidential and congressional elections and debates over judicial appointments. Grassroots efforts to restrict abortion have met with some success; post-*Roe* Supreme Court decisions have imposed various restrictions, most notably the imposition of spousal and parental notification requirements. Currently, the issue of late-term abortion is intensely debated (though most abortions are performed in the first trimester of pregnancy).

Notwithstanding the intensity of pro-choice and pro-life activism, American public opinion on abortion has remained steadfastly consistent. Since 1975, approximately one-fifth of Americans agree that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances, another one-fifth believe that abortion should be legal in all circumstances, and a broad majority (approx. 60 percent) are of the opinion that abortion should be legal but restricted. Americans are most likely to endorse abortion as an option in cases of rape, and when pregnancy poses a physical threat to the mother or fetus; fewer endorse economic need as a reason justifying abortion.

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute (<http://www.alanguttmacher.org>), abortion is one of the most common surgical procedures performed in the USA: 1.29 million abortions were performed in 2002, with almost half of all unintended pregnancies ending in abortion. The abortion rate has

declined from its peak of 29 (per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44) in the early 1980s, to 20 currently. There has been an especially noticeable decrease among 15- to 19-year-old girls (from 43.5 in the mid-to-late 1980s to 24.0 currently). By contrast, the overall abortion rate in England and Wales is considerably lower, at 17.0 (for women aged 15–44).

Many Americans argue that the number of abortions alone constitutes a social problem; others suggest that the aging and declining prevalence of abortion providers is a social problem in ferment. The majority of obstetricians who perform abortion are age 50 or over, and the proportion of US counties without abortion providers increased from 77 percent in the late 1970s to 86 percent in the late 1990s (Finer & Henshaw 2003: 6). A majority of women who face the dilemma of an unintended pregnancy report using contraception during the month they became pregnant (53 percent), though not always correctly (Finer et al. 2005). Other abortion-inducing circumstances include inadequate finances, relationship problems, concerns over readiness for motherhood, and psychological and physical health problems. Nonetheless, 60 percent of those who get an abortion are already mothers, and 12 percent have previously had an abortion. Across all age groups, the incidence of abortion is greater among women who are single, poor, and non-white (Hispanic, black, or other ethnic minority). Rural women are less likely to have access to abortion providers, and to use abortion in the case of an unwanted pregnancy.

Given the socio-demographic trends in abortion usage, pro-choice supporters argue that it is not abortion per se that is a social problem but the social and economic circumstances of many women's lives. In particular, they argue that women's lack of resources, including the absence of health insurance, the lack of access to and effective use of contraception, and the absence of school sexual education programs, contributes to unintended pregnancies. Abortion supporters also point out that restrictions on abortion (e.g., spousal and parental notification), do not recognize the high incidence of spousal and family violence and the well-grounded fears that many women and teenagers may have in disclosing their pregnancies.

SEE ALSO: Family, Sociology of; Social Problems, Politics of

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### accommodation

Accommodation was one of the four features of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess's model of social interaction. Though the concept illustrated racial and ethnic social changes taking place in the USA and the rest of the world during the last half of the nineteenth century and the first two or three decades of the twentieth, and for this reason lacks a certain relevance today, there are still aspects of the term, as defined by Park and Burgess, which might provide insights into specific patterns of racial and ethnic interaction and aid in our understanding of the dynamics of social change. Utilizing Simmel's model of dominance and its pivotal role in superordinate and subordinate relations, Park and Burgess describe accommodation as a procedure which limits conflicts and cements relations, in that groups and individuals recognize dominant individuals and groups as well as their positions within these super- and subordinate relations. On the surface, and in theory, this logic appears to be one of "live and let live," and appears to be grounded in an idea similar to that of social and cultural pluralism. However, the reality is quite different. However, whether referring to majority and minority populations, in population percentages, or populations differing in ethnicity, religion, or culture, accommodation refers to those arrangements, implied or explicit, which regulate the types of exchanges and relations between groups. These arrangements, spoken or unspoken, written or unwritten, determine which rights, privileges, and obligations shall accrue to some groups and be denied to others. Indeed, the history of multicultural and multiethnic nations has been a history of "forced" accommodation, and the USA, Canada, and the nations of Latin America have all forced major segments of their societies to accommodate to majority, sometimes minority, values and standards. Hence, in the USA the accommodation was linguistic, religious, and cultural; in Canada, linguistic and cultural, and in

Latin America, indigenous populations were largely oppressed and suppressed by Europeans and mixed populations which largely excluded indigenous populations from the body politic. In the USA, Canada, and throughout Latin America accommodation meant giving in to the dominant groups by following the procedures and guidelines constructed by them.

SEE ALSO: Acculturation; Assimilation; Park, Robert E. and Burgess, Ernest W.

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### accounts

An account, as the term is most commonly used in sociology, refers to statements that explain disruptions in the social and moral order. In this sense, accounts are linguistic devices by which actors attempt to reposition themselves as socially acceptable and morally reputable in the face of imputations of deviance or failure. Although the concept of accounts has roots in C. Wright Mills's 1940 article on "Situated actions and the vocabularies of motives," in Gresham Sykes and David Matza's 1957 article on "Techniques of neutralization," and more generally in the work of Erving Goffman, the term itself was introduced in its distinctive sociological sense by Marvin Scott and Sanford Lyman in their 1968 article, entitled simply "Accounts."

Accounts may be classified by what they accomplish, by their functions and consequences, both for individual actors and for the social and moral order. First, accounts may restore breaches in the social order. Second, accounts, even taken narrowly as explanations of disruptions of an ongoing moral order, are deeply implicated in processes of social control.

Third, and more generally, accounts are a form of making meaning. Whether, as some suggest, this meaning making emerges from a deep-felt human urge or, as is more demonstrable, from specific social situations that challenge existing understandings, accounts provide interpretations of behavior and its motives. Understood narrowly, accounts are efforts to give socially acceptable meanings to particular and otherwise discredited behaviors. Understood more broadly, as plotted narratives, accounts are efforts to connect a series of events and behaviors into a coherent story, with a

beginning, a middle, and an end, causally related and with a more or less explicit moral content. Fourth, and more specifically, accounts create identities. Because accounts involve the imputation of motives, and the selective avowal and disavowal of behaviors as motivated, they also involve claims as to what is and is not a part of the self. When offered with deep-felt belief on the part of the speaker, as is often the case in response to illness, divorce, or other disruptions of a previous routine, accounts contribute to the formation of both personal (internally held) and social (publicly enacted) identities. When offered cynically, as self-conscious efforts to manipulate impressions, whether for the enhancement of status or to avoid sanctions, accounts may not contribute to the formation of personal identities but nonetheless still contribute to the formation of social identities.

SEE ALSO: Accounts, Deviant; Identity Theory; Mills, C. Wright; Social Order

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### acculturation

Acculturation can be defined as the process of bringing previously separated and disconnected cultures into contact with one another. Acculturation is not the absorption of different cultures as a result of a mere physical contact or superficial exposure. The processes of cultural transmission and cultural borrowing are the result of conscious decision-making on the part of an individual or a group that is approaching a culturally distinct group. If no force or coercion is involved, the individual or group must decide whether and to what extent the new culture will be accepted or rejected. E. Franklin Frazier (1957) made the distinction between “material acculturation” and “ideational acculturation.” Material acculturation involves the conveying of language and other cultural tools whereas ideational acculturation involves the conveying of morals and norms. Individuals and groups can consciously decide to accept the language and cultural tools of a new culture without accepting and internalizing the morals and norms of the new culture.

The process of acculturation is complex and is not a simple matter of the cultural majority forcing its culture upon the cultural minority. Some individuals and groups respond favorably and with relative ease to the possibility of acculturation whereas others respond unfavorably and with unease. How the individual or group perceives the process of acculturation and how the larger society perceives this process are both significant. If the larger society views the possibility of an incoming group's acculturation as favorable and with ease, there will be less hostility and discomfort throughout the process. If the acculturation of an incoming group is viewed unfavorably and with unease by the larger society, there will be greater hostility, discomfort, and the process will require more effort on the part of this incoming group.

SEE ALSO: Accommodation; Assimilation; Culture

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### actor-network theory

Actor-network theory originated in the 1980s as a movement within the sociology of science, centered at the Paris School of Mines. Key developers were Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, Antoine Hennion, and John Law. It was sharply critical of earlier historical and sociological analyses of science, which had drawn a clear divide between the “inside” of a science (to be analyzed in terms of its adherence or not to a unitary scientific method) and its “outside” (the field of its application).

Actor-network theorists made three key moves. First, they argued for a semiotic network reading of scientific practice. Human and non-human actors (actants) were assumed to be subject to the same analytic categories, just as a ring or a prince could hold the same structural position in a fairy tale. They could be enrolled in a network or not, could hold or not hold certain moral positions, and so forth. This profound ontological position has been the least understood but the most generative aspect of the theory. Second, they argued that in producing their theories, scientists weave together human and non-human actors into relatively stable network nodes, or “black boxes.” Thus a given

astronomer can tie together her telescope, some distant stars, and a funding agency into an impregnable fortress, and to challenge her results you would need to find your own telescope, stars, and funding sources. Practically, this entailed an agnostic position on the “truth” of science. Indeed, they argued for a principle of symmetry according to which the same set of explanatory factors should be used to account for failed and successful scientific theories. There is no ultimate arbiter of right and wrong. Third, they maintained that in the process of constructing these relatively stable network configurations, scientists produced contingent nature – society divides. Nature and society were not pre-given entities that could be used to explain anything else; they were the outcomes of the *work* of doing technoscience. Latour called this the “Janus face” of science. As it was being produced it was seen as contingent; once produced it was seen as always and already true.

Together, these three moves made the central analytical unit the work of the intermediary. There is no society out there to which scientists respond as they build their theories, nor is there a nature which constrains them to a single telling of their stories. Rather, the technoscientist stands between nature and society, politics and technology. She can act as a spokesperson for her array of actants (things in the world, people in her lab), and if successful can black-box these to create the effect of truth.

The theory has given rise to a number of concepts which have proven useful in a wide range of technoscientific analyses. It has remained highly influential as a methodological tool for analyzing truth-making in all its forms. The call to “follow the actors” – to see what they do rather than report on what they say they do – has been liberating for those engaged in studying scientists, who frequently hold their own truth and practice as if above the social and political fray. Their attention to the work of representation on paper led to the ideas of “immutable mobiles” and “centers of calculation,” which trace the power of technoscience to its ability to function as a centralizing networked bureaucracy. Indeed, the anthropological eye of actor-networked theorists – looking at work practices and not buying into actors’ categories – has led to a rich meeting between the sociology of work, the Chicago School of sociology, and actor-network theory. Latour’s later work on the distribution of political and social values between the technical world and the social institution has opened up a powerful discourse about the political and moral force of technology.

The actor-network theory itself has changed significantly in recent years, including Latour’s (1999) tongue-in-cheek denial of each of its central terms and the hyphen connecting them. This has been in response to a number of critiques that the theory privileged the powerful, Machiavellian technoscientist as world-builder, without giving much opportunity for representing the invisible technicians within the networks and alternative voices from without (Star 1995).

SEE ALSO: Science and Culture; Science, Social Construction of; Technology, Science, and Culture

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### Addams, Jane (1860–1935)

Feminist pragmatist, social settlement leader, and Nobel Laureate, Jane Addams was a charismatic world leader with an innovative intellectual legacy in sociology and one of the most important sociologists in the world. From 1890 to 1935, she led dozens of women in sociology, although after 1920 most of these women were forced out of sociology and into other fields such as social work, applied psychology, and pedagogy.

Jane Addams was born on September 6, 1860, in Cedarville, Illinois. In 1887, accompanied by her college friend Ellen Gates Starr, Addams visited the social settlement Toynbee Hall in London’s East End. It provided a model in 1889 for the friends to co-found their social settlement, Hull-House, in Chicago.

Hull-House became the institutional anchor for women’s gender-segregated work in sociology and liaison with the most important male sociological center during this era, the University of Chicago. Addams led an international social movement which brought together all classes; social groups; ages, especially the young and the elderly; and the oppressed to form a democratic community able to

articulate and enact their ideals and needs. She described her work in *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910) and *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1930). Her combined thought and practice is called “feminist pragmatism”: an American theory uniting liberal values and a belief in a rational public with a cooperative, nurturing, and liberating model of the self, the other, and the community. Education and democracy are mechanisms to organize and improve society, learn about community, participate in group decisions, and become a “citizen.” Democracy emerges from different groups with distinct perspectives, histories, communities, and structures of the self. She discussed these concepts in *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902); *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907); *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909).

Addams’ intellectual legacy as a feminist pragmatist articulated radical changes in American life and politics, altering the possibilities for human growth and action, especially for the poor and oppressed.

SEE ALSO: Chicago School; Feminist Pedagogy

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## addiction and dependency

Terms such as addiction and dependency are frequently used to describe patterns of illicit drug use. However, there are no universal definitions of these terms and they are frequently used inconsistently and interchangeably. As a result, it is difficult to estimate the number of drug users who can be described as addicted or dependent. Addiction tends to refer to dependence on a particular drug or drugs, which has developed to the extent that it has a severe and harmful impact on an individual drug user. The term implies that the drug user is unable to give up drug use without incurring adverse effects.

Dependency can refer to physical and/or emotional dependency and drug users may experience one or both forms. Drug users can become physically dependent on drugs, thus continuing with their drug use in order to avoid the physical discomfort of withdrawal. They can also become emotionally dependent on drugs; for example, relying upon drug use to seek pleasure or to avoid pain. Drugscope (a UK-based independent center of expertise on drugs) suggests that the term dependency is

preferable to addiction because the latter is linked to negative images of drug use.

Sociologists have been influential in highlighting the importance of societal reaction to drug use. Drawing upon the insights of symbolic interactionism, Howard Becker’s classic study *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (1963) drew attention to the processes by which individuals became drug users within a deviant subculture. Employing the notion of a career, he highlighted how the labeling of individuals as deviants by the public and agents of social control (including criminal justice agencies and medical professionals) helped to increase levels of drug use. He argued that by attaching a stigmatizing label to a drug user, the individual responds to this new identity. Other influential research, such as Jock Young’s *The Drugtakers* (1971), has highlighted the role of the media in amplifying drug use.

Sociological analysis of drug use has played a significant role in challenging the medicalization of so-called deviant behavior. Sociologists have challenged the practice of referring to drug use as a disease with the implication that it can be cured solely through medical treatment. In particular, feminist sociologists have been highly critical of this approach, which fails to recognize the links between women’s subordinate position in society and their use of illicit drugs.

SEE ALSO: Deviance, Medicalization of; Deviant Careers; Drug Use; Labeling Theory

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EMMA WINCUP

## adoption

Adoption is a legal act through which a child is placed under the permanent care and guardianship of one or more individuals who are not his or her biological parents. The parental rights and responsibilities of the child’s birth parents are dissolved and transferred to the adoptive parents. Current estimates suggest that about 4 percent of Americans are adopted.



The pre-existing connection between adopter and adoptee may be that of relatives or non-relatives. Relative adopters are more likely to be black, poor, and have low levels of education. Non-relative adopters are more likely to be white and have higher levels of income and education – often adopting due to infertility. Adoptions are governed by state laws which often privilege heterosexual, married couples of child-bearing age.

In the USA, the small number of parents who willingly place their children for adoption are generally white, relatively advantaged, and have high educational aspirations. An increasing number of adoptions are also coming through the foster care system, in which birth parents are typically black or Hispanic and come from very poor backgrounds. International adoptions have also risen in recent years.

Assumptions about the primacy of biological ties between parent and child are prevalent; however, studies indicate that adoptive families are more similar than different from biological families. In fact, adoptive family contexts generally erode any detrimental effects of conditions prior to adoption. Most adoptees and their families do well on critical measures of life success and are personally satisfied with the outcomes of adoption.

SEE ALSO: Fatherhood; Marriage; Motherhood

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## Affect control theory

Affect control theory (ACT) is grounded in symbolic interactionist insights about the importance of using language and symbols to define situations. The theory begins with the assertion that people reduce uncertainty by developing “working understandings” of their social worlds. They label parts of social situations, using language available to them. After creating this definition, they are motivated to maintain it. ACT assumes that our labeling of situations evokes affective meanings.

These affective meanings, rather than specific labels, are what we try to maintain during interaction. The theory is formalized in three parts: the measurement of affect, event reaction equations, and mathematical statement of the control process.

#### SCOPE

Scope statements specify the conditions under which a theory applies. There are specific conditions that limit ACT’s applicability: a social behavior must be directed toward an object (e.g., another person); there must be at least one observer who is a member of a language culture already identified by ACT researchers (e.g., the USA, Canada, or Japan); and the theory only applies to labeled aspects of social experiences (e.g., identities and behaviors).

#### SENTIMENTS

ACT assumes that people affectively respond to every social event (the *affective reaction principle*). The theory describes these affective responses along three dimensions of meaning: evaluation (goodness or badness), potency (powerfulness or weakness), and activity (liveliness or quietness). These are cross-cultural, universal dimensions describe substantial variation in affective meaning and can be measured mathematically. The affective meanings associated with labeled concepts (identities, behaviors, emotions, and so forth) are called *sentiments*. Although stable within a culture, sentiments vary cross-culturally. ACT researchers have used evaluation, potency and activity ratings to index meanings in different cultures, including the USA, Canada, Japan, Germany, China, and Northern Ireland.

#### IMPRESSIONS

Social interaction changes our perceptions of labeled actors and behaviors. In response to observing a Mother Dragging her Daughter through the park, our feelings about that mother, that daughter, and perhaps even what it means to drag someone may change. In ACT, we call these situated meanings *impressions*. To predict impressions, events are simplified into Actor Behaves toward Object sentences. Event reactions are quantified using impression formation equations created by regressing pre-event sentiments onto post-event impressions. Once generated, ACT can predict how people will feel after an interaction using only their initial definition of the situation.

#### CONTROL AND RECONSTRUCTION

ACT proposes that actors work to experience impressions that are consistent with their sentiments

(the *affect control principle*). Discrepancies between sentiments and impressions reveal how well interactions we experience are confirming cultural prescriptions. Affect control theory defines *deflection* as the discrepancy (measured mathematically) between sentiments and impressions. Using mathematical equations that predict deflection researchers (using a computer program called *INTERACT*) can predict future behaviors that minimize deflection. However, when deflection is inexorably large, the observer may need to reconstruct the event using different labels (e.g., using Scrooge instead of Businessman) in order to reduce deflection.

#### TRAITS, EMOTIONS, AND OTHER THEORETICAL ELABORATIONS

If we take these same equations and hold the actor's *identity* constant, we can solve for a trait that can be added to the actor's identity to make "sense" of experiences (e.g., adding the trait Bad to Mother to produce the identity Bad Mother). ACT also uses these equations to make predictions about the emotions that actors and objects are likely to feel in social interaction. Researchers have elaborated the basic Actor–Behavior–Object grammar of ACT to include settings and nonverbal behaviors.

SEE ALSO: Emotion: Social Psychological Aspects; Identity Theory; Identity Control Theory; Social Identity Theory; Symbolic Interaction

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### affirmative action

The term affirmative action encompasses a broad range of voluntary and mandated policies and procedures intended to provide equal access to educational and employment opportunities for members of historically excluded groups. Foremost among the bases for historical exclusion have been race, ethnicity, and sex, although consideration is sometimes extended to other groups (e.g., Vietnam veterans, the

disabled). Both the concept of affirmative action and its application have undergone a series of transformations and interpretations. These shifts have contributed to considerable ambivalence in levels of public support for and opposition to affirmative action policies.

There is no single model of affirmative action. Affirmative action efforts may be either public or private. Definitions of protected groups range from very restricted to very broad. Enforcement mechanisms may be quite rigorous or virtually non-existent.

Affirmative action is in many ways an outgrowth of the Civil Rights Movements. In particular, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination in any areas of employment that was based on race, color, creed, or sex. The year after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 11246, which prohibited discrimination against minorities by federal contractors. While American presidents had routinely been issuing similar Executive Orders for some time, EO 11246 was different in two important ways. First, it included sex rather than merely race as a protected category. Second, it established an enforcement mechanism, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC). While not a powerful entity, the OFCC was an important step in institutionalizing affirmative action. Affirmative action received a further boost with the passage of the 1972 Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA). The EEOA required federal agencies to adopt affirmative action. By 2000, this legislation covered about 3.5 million federal employees (Harper & Reskin 2005).

Whether applied to employment or to education, affirmative action has been a politically sensitive issue. Much of the contention has been grounded in differing understandings and interpretations of affirmative action. While most participants in the affirmative action debate agree on the social benefits of racially and culturally diverse workforces and student bodies, they differ sharply on how to achieve this. Opponents of affirmative action often emphasize the apparent contradictions between group-based remedies and the American commitment to individualism and meritocracy. Many maintain that affirmative action unfairly stigmatizes members of protected categories, who can never be certain that their success was due to their individual merit. Advocates discuss the benefits of more exclusive hiring and admissions criteria and the need in a fair society to provide reparations for indisputable histories of disadvantage.

SEE ALSO: Discrimination; School Segregation, Desegregation

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### age, period, and cohort effects

Age, period, and cohort are variables often used in social research that are so closely interrelated that the effects of one cannot be studied without consideration of the effects of the others. Each variable is a perfect linear function of the other two, which means that when any two are statistically held constant, the third has no variance. It follows that the effects of all three cannot be simultaneously estimated with any conventional statistical analysis – a phenomenon known as the age–period–cohort conundrum.

The age–period–cohort conundrum is important because all three variables are important for the explanation of a wide range of social and psychological phenomena. Age, the amount of time passed since an entity came into existence (by birth, in the case of human individuals), almost always needs to be an independent or control variable when human individuals are the units of analysis. Almost as important are cohort, the time when an entity came into existence, and period, the time when measurement was taken. All three are closely and causally related to a wide range of influences on human characteristics and behaviors.

To illustrate the APC conundrum, consider a hypothetical case in which a cross-sectional study of adults shows that at one point in time there was a positive linear relationship of age to support for a certain social policy. From these data alone one cannot tell whether the relationship reflects age or cohort effects, or both, because age and cohort are perfectly correlated in cross-sectional data. Now, consider panel data showing that specific individuals on average became more supportive of the policy as they grew older. From these data alone, one cannot tell whether the change resulted from period or age related influences, or both, because in panel data age and period are perfectly correlated. These two sets of data together suggest positive age effects, but they do not prove such effects because there is a logically possible

alternative explanation. They could have resulted from positive period effects offset at each age level by opposite-signed cohort effects. This explanation seems rather improbable, because according to theory and some empirical evidence, most period and cohort effects on attitudes result ultimately from the same influences and thus should usually be reinforcing rather than offsetting. However, “usually” is not “always,” and thus a confident conclusion about age effects is not warranted without consideration of other relevant information.

This hypothetical example illustrates the importance for attempts to disentangle age, period, and cohort effects (cohort analyses) of theory and what Converse (1976) has called “side information” – information other than the APC data at hand. Good cohort analysis is not “plug and play” but rather requires human judgment at each stage of the process.

SEE ALSO: Demography

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NORVAL D. GLENN

### agency (and intention)

Agency is the faculty for action. This faculty may be uniquely human. Action differs from the (mere) behavior of non-human organisms, which is driven by innate or conditioned reflexes and instincts. Non-human organisms have no or little control over how they behave. They do not have a sense of self or, if they do, it is not reflexive. Their behavior is caused by forces they cannot comprehend or influence. Human actors are different because they are conscious and aware of the world, themselves, and other actors. To some extent, what they do, and who they are, is up to them. They are open to the world, and not stuck in the immediately pressing here and now of a local niche. Human identity is not fixed from the start, and so human beings have to make themselves into who they will become. This makes predictions of actions difficult, if not impossible. Action is contingent; behavior is necessary. An actor can act, but also not, and can also act in different ways. While actors may have reasons for their actions, such reasons do not



determine actions in the same rigid way that natural forces cause behavior.

The faculty for agency is located in the human mind. The mind is the seat of reflexivity, deliberation, and intentionality. Before we act, we rehearse possibilities and alternatives. The mind also houses the sense of who we are as individual persons. Humans have minds and selves, and these together are the sources for action. Action is motivated, but not caused, by intentions. These intentions give actions their meaning. To understand agency, action, and actors, sociology needs to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that actions have for their actors. This is difficult, since intentions and meanings presumably are mental states inside the head, and so cannot be directly observed, unlike overt behavior. While each of us can introspect our own intentions, what happens in other minds may ultimately be inaccessible. In fact, for Freud, we do not even know, and chronically deceive ourselves, about what happens in our own minds.

Much depends on how our agentic core is developed. One possibility is rational choice and exchange theory. This holds person, intention, and action constant. In this tradition of scholarship, there is no genuine problem or difficulty with agency because it is settled by *fiat*. By axiom or definition, all actors are deemed rational.

On the other hand, in the symbolic interactionism tradition, agency is more contingent and open-ended. This is not for the external observer to decide, but emerges from the practice of social life itself. The faculty for agency is not ready made, but emerges through a process of social formation and re-formation. To understand agency, one needs to take the “actor’s point of view” and see the actors’ worlds from their own perspectives. Since all action is symbolically structured, most importantly through language and culture, the key to agency and action is interpretation, not explanation.

According to ethnomethodologists, members of ordinary everyday society do not so much act as enact the social practices of common sense. There are very narrow limits on what actors can be consciously aware of and define or redefine. Members are not the authors of these practices but one outcome of them. Members are the means by which society reproduces itself. Social practices cannot be defined and redefined at will.

Yet another possibility is a constructivist, rather than realist, notion of agency. Constructivism sees agency not as a faculty that is, in fact, had by actors but as a property that may, or may not, be ascribed to them. Agency then becomes an

attribution, akin to the granting of a privilege that can also be withdrawn and withheld. This constructivist turn in the study of agency makes variation in attributions the key. Agency now becomes a second-order construct, not a first-order essence or natural kind. Allowing for variation might make it possible to render agency more amenable to empirical research, whereas up to now it has been bogged down in conceptual and semantic analysis.

SEE ALSO: Constructionism; Ethnomethodology; Micro–Macro Links; Rational Choice Theories; Structure and Agency; Symbolic Interaction

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STEPHAN FUCHS

## aggression

Aggression is any behavior that is directed toward injuring, harming, or inflicting pain on another living being or group of beings. Generally, the victim(s) of aggression must wish to avoid such behavior in order for it to be considered true aggression. *Hostile aggression* is an aggressive act that results from anger, and is intended to inflict pain or injury. *Instrumental aggression* is regarded as a means to an end other than pain or injury. The concept of aggression is broad, and includes many categories of behavior (street crime, child abuse, war, etc.). Theories on aggression are commonly categorized according to the three variables that are present whenever any aggressive act is committed. First, *aggressors* are examined in terms of the causes of their actions. Research/theories have devoted particular attention to biological, psychopathological, social learning, and rational choice explanations for aggression, in addition to a variety of other influences (such as drugs, alcohol, arousal, etc.). The phenomenon of aggression is complex, and many factors may affect those who engage in it. Second, *situational* factors may have an important impact on aggression. Issues such as frustration–aggression, environmental stressors, and sociocultural influences (such as the popular culture) have received significant examination in this regard. *Targets* or *victims* constitute the third component of aggressive behavior. Demographic factors (such as race, gender), and the retaliatory capacity of victims are of importance here. Effects of aggression on victims, such as *learned helplessness* and *blaming the victim*, are also of significant concern.

SEE ALSO: Learned Helplessness, Social Learning Theory

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WILLIAM J. KINNEY

## aging, demography of

The demography of aging began to emerge as a distinct subfield within demography during the second half of the twentieth century, when low fertility and mortality rates were creating dramatic shifts in the age structure of developed countries. Early in this field's development, demography of aging researchers were focused on defining old age and aging, documenting changes in the age structure, identifying mortality trends, describing the health status of older adults, explaining the geographical distribution and mobility of older adults, understanding the life course and cohort flow, and exploring living arrangements, family support, and retirement trends. More recently demographers have become increasingly concerned with population aging as it relates to social transfer programs, social institutions such as the economy and the family, and the overall quality of life for different age groups (e.g., children, working-aged adults, older adults). Formal demographers, who are focused on understanding demographic trends related to fertility, mortality, and migration, and social demographers, who examine the social causes and consequences of demographic trends, use quantitative methods to understand population aging. Formal demographers tend to document worldwide trends in population aging and national changes in mortality, morbidity, disability, and geographical distribution. Social demographers examine a range of issues related to population aging including the potential demand placed on health care systems, the impact of changing family structure on care provision, the economic implications of an aging population, and the motivations for residential mobility. In doing so, researchers in the demography of aging provide a justification for studying older adults, identify the social causes of aging, and consider the various consequences of shifting population age structure.

SEE ALSO: Aging, Sociology of; Demographic Techniques: Population Pyramids and Age/Sex Structure

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JANET M. WILMOTH AND CHARLES F. LONGINO, JR.

## aging, mental health, and well-being

Social factors are strongly implicated in mental health and well-being throughout life, including old age. Sociologists argue that mental health and subjective well-being are powerful indicators of how well societies serve their members both individually and collectively. That is, effective societies not only meet the basic needs of their members, but also provide the conditions and opportunities that sustain emotional health and perceptions that life is good.

The vast majority of Americans are relatively free of psychiatric or emotional symptoms and are generally satisfied with their lives. This pattern is at least as strong for older adults as for young and middle-aged adults. Comparison of research based on older samples with those from age-heterogeneous samples reveals only a few rather subtle, but important, differences. The most distinctive aspect of depression and distress in later life is the prominent role of physical illness and disability in increasing risk of depression. Many studies suggest that physical illness and/or disability is the strongest single predictor of depression and distress; in contrast, physical health is of negligible importance during young adulthood and middle age. In contrast, demographic variables are weaker predictors of depression and distress in late life than earlier in adulthood. Racial or ethnic differences are minimally important during later life and even gender differences in depression, which are very large in young adulthood, narrow substantially by late life.

SEE ALSO: Aging, Sociology of

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LINDA K. GEORGE

## aging, sociology of

The sociology of aging is both broad and deep. The breadth of the field can be highlighted in

several ways. First, the sociology of aging encompasses investigations of aging as a process, of older adults as a group, and of old age as a distinctive stage of the life course. Second, aging research is performed at multiple levels of analysis, from macro-level studies of age structure within and across societies, to meso-level studies of labor-force participation and family structure, to micro-level investigations of health and well-being. Third, aging research uses the full repertoire of methods that characterize the discipline, including life tables and other demographic methods, survey research, ethnographic methods, and observational studies. The depth of the field results from the accumulation of scientific studies that now span more than three-quarters of a century.

A large proportion of sociological research on aging rests on the challenges posed by an aging society, although that impetus is not always explicit. Studies of public and private transfers of money, time, and in-kind services rest in large part on their salience for sustaining an aging population. Studies of health, disability, and quality of life are important not only because they address threats to well-being, but also because they shed light on the factors that keep older adults from excessive reliance on public programs. Even studies of the caregivers of impaired older adults rest not only on concern about the health risks of chronic stress, but also on the desire to enable families to bear as much of the cost of care as possible, thus relieving public programs. Thus, age structure and its social implications is a significant and far-reaching arm of aging research.

Multiple forces, both social and non-social, determine the process and experience of aging. Historically, there was a tendency to attribute the aging process and the experience of late life to inherent biological and developmental processes. Most of us are relatively ignorant of the extent to which the process and experience of aging vary across historical time, finding it difficult, for example, to imagine a time when there was no retirement or when the odds of dying were essentially the same during childhood, adulthood, and old age. And yet, retirement as a predictable life course transition and odds favoring survival to old age both emerged in the twentieth century.

The vast majority of aging research falls under the general topic of aging and well-being, with well-being broadly defined to include any social asset (e.g., economic resources, life satisfaction). Social scientific interest in aging was spurred by concerns about the well-being of older adults in both absolute and relative (to other age groups) terms. This is

probably not surprising. The history of sociology in general has been driven by concerns about social disadvantage – its prevalence, antecedents, and consequences. The types of well-being examined in relation to aging are numerous. A partial list of the forms of well-being frequently studied in late life include longevity, physical health, disability, mental health, subjective well-being, economic status, and identity or sense of self.

Since the late 1980s, the life course perspective has assumed increasing influence in sociological research, especially research on aging. The life course perspective focuses on the complex links between social/historical change and personal biography. In addition, the life course perspective is ideally suited to linking macro- and meso-level social conditions to individual behaviors and well-being, to tracing the effects of both structural opportunities and constraints of human agency (i.e., personal choices) over the long haul, and documenting the many ways that the past is indeed prologue to the future. Thus, life course research is an important and exciting part of the sociology of aging.

SEE ALSO: Age, Period, and Cohort Effects; Aging, Demography of; Aging, Mental Health, and Well-Being; Demographic Transition Theory; Life Course

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LINDA K. GEORGE

## AIDS, sociology of

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is caused by a retrovirus, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), identified in 1984. It is currently estimated that over 35 million people are living with HIV, the vast majority living in low- to middle-income countries. HIV/AIDS is not evenly distributed and prevalence rates range from 1 percent to 25 percent in the adult population. While some countries, such as those in northern Europe, have “concentrated” epidemics mainly confined to gay men, others such as those in southern Africa, are experiencing “generalized” epidemics where the entire sexually active population is affected. Others such as Russia are experiencing an

accelerating epidemic, initially confined to transmission among injecting drug users but now becoming generalized. The USA and countries in South America and in the Asia-Pacific region are experiencing multiple epidemics – among people who inject drugs, among gay men, and increasingly among the poor. While the global incidence rate and incidence itself appears to have peaked in the late 1990s, the estimated annual number of new infections over the last few years appears to have stabilized at the alarmingly high rate of 2 to 4 million per year and there continue to be more new HIV infections each year than there are AIDS-related deaths. The world is facing a global pandemic: a pandemic marked by inequalities of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation.

Although there is no cure for HIV, effective treatment, in the form of anti-retroviral therapies, has slowed the progression from HIV to AIDS to death in almost all who have treatment access. While in the income-rich world there has been an 80 per cent fall in AIDS-related deaths, in low-income countries only a very small proportion of those in need of treatment are currently receiving effective therapy. Prospects for treatment access continue to be thwarted by poverty and global inequalities, as well as pharmaceutical patent rights. The number of new cases still outpaces the expansion of treatment access and the demand for treatment will continue to grow as people continue to become infected.

As a blood borne virus, HIV is most commonly transmitted by sexual intercourse (vaginal and anal) with an HIV infected person. It is also transmitted by the sharing of HIV-contaminated needles and syringes, from an HIV-positive mother to child during birth and breast feeding, and via the use of contaminated blood products. There is at present no effective prophylactic vaccine. Consistent condom use for sex and the use of clean needles and syringes for drug injection are the most efficacious prevention strategies currently available. Abstinence from both sex and drug use has not been shown to be an effective strategy and there continues to be debate about the effectiveness of sexual monogamy. Male circumcision has been shown to reduce the likelihood of sexual transmission from women to men, but male circumcision alone is unlikely to curb the epidemic. Clinical trials continue the search for other efficacious prevention tools, for example, microbicides.

More than efficacious prevention technologies – even when combined – are needed. Changes in social relations are also necessary. Gender inequality is one of the key social drivers of HIV-transmission and the gendered patterns of social and economic dependency which result in women having little access to

education and other resources need to be changed. Human rights are central to an effective response. All people have the right to HIV-prevention information and HIV-prevention technologies, and people living with HIV have the right to effective treatment as well as the right to equality before the law, privacy, liberty of movement, work, equal access to education, housing, health care, social security, assistance, and welfare. Stigma and discrimination undermine an effective response.

Social transformation is necessary. Evidence indicates that HIV transmission rates fall in countries where governments acknowledge that HIV is a virus that affects everyone, fund prevention and health promotion including education programs, promote condom use and needle and syringe programs, support social movements by funding at-risk communities to combat HIV-transmission, and provide treatment, care and support to all those living with HIV/AIDS. In the absence of these factors and in the presence of moral agendas that thwart the promotion of effective technologies, such as condoms, prevention efforts falter.

HIV/AIDS is an issue of global governance. The policies and practices of AIDS prevention, treatment and support not only affect health care systems, they also affect the nature of social relations and the values and ideologies that underpin them. The challenge is to address the social, cultural and economic dimensions of health, to address issues of power, and to fight discrimination.

SEE ALSO: Drug Use; Gender, Development and; Globalization, Sexuality and; HIV/AIDS and Population; Human Rights

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SUSAN KIPPAX

## alcoholism and alcohol abuse

Normative structures surrounding alcohol use vary greatly over history and geography. In many settings drinking only accompanies rituals of celebration and social solidarity. There is however a long history of solitary and group drunkenness with adverse consequences. Dangers of alcohol consumption are recognized in its prohibition throughout Islam. In general, however, history shows cons

of socially integrated alcohol use. Concepts of societal-level alcohol-related problems first emerged some 500 years ago. These social problems grew with industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and population increase.

Medical definitions of alcohol problems are sociologically constructed, focused on failures in role performance and/or destructive behaviors. These behaviors can range from breaking small groups' rules to committing murder in an intoxicated rage. Alcoholism has an additional sociological element in its definition, namely the loss of self-control wherein drinking is repeated despite substantial costs to the drinker.

Alcohol problems have emerged globally in concert with "modernization" and social change. Cultures where alcohol has been consumed non-problematically for centuries have seen the emergence of alcohol problems. Patterns of consumption (time, place, amount) change, traditional forms of social control over intoxication fall away, and industrialization creates roles that are intolerant of routine drinking.

Men drink more than women in all societies. Industrialization, women's employment, and gender equality for women are associated with drinking patterns similar to men's. Because of alcohol's potency, drinking among youth generates substantial social control efforts in industrialized societies, with these controls actually encouraging the dangerous behavior called "binge drinking." By contrast, in China mandating a minimum age for drinking has only recently been considered.

Many sociologists are skeptical about the disease model of alcoholism since personal will and social support are core to the achievement of abstinence. Applications of sociology are however central in achieving social control over alcohol problems since complete prohibition has proven to be ineffective.

SEE ALSO: Drugs, Drug Abuse, and Drug Policy; Social Control; Social Problems, Politics of

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PAUL ROMAN

## alienation

Alienation is the social and psychological separation between oneself and one's life experiences. Alienation is a concept originally applied to work and work settings but today is also used to characterize

separation from the political sphere. To be alienated is to live in a society but not to feel that one is a part of its ongoing activities.

Theories of alienation start with the writings of Marx, who identified the capacity for self-directed *creative activity* as the core distinction between humans and animals. If people cannot express their *species being* (their creativity), they are reduced to the status of animals or machines. Marx argued that, under capitalism, workers lose control over their work and, as a consequence, are alienated in at least four ways. First, they are alienated from the *products* of their labor. They no longer determine what is to be made nor what use will be made of it. Work is reduced to being a means to an end – a means to acquire money to buy the material necessities of life. Second, workers are alienated from the *process* of work. Someone else controls the pace, pattern, tools, and techniques of their work. Third, because workers are separated from their activity, they become alienated from *themselves*. Non-alienated work, in contrast, entails the same enthusiastic absorption and self-realization as hobbies and leisure pursuits. Fourth, alienated labor is an isolated endeavor, not part of a collectively planned effort to meet a group need. Consequently, workers are alienated from *others* as well as from themselves. Marx argued that these four aspects of alienation reach their peak under industrial capitalism and that alienated work, which is inherently dissatisfying, would naturally produce in workers a desire to change the existing system. Alienation, in Marx's view, thus plays a crucial role in leading to social revolution to change society toward a non-alienated future.

Today, the core of alienation research has moved away from the social philosophical approach of Marx, based on projecting a future that *could be*, and toward a more empirical study of the causes and consequences of alienation within the world of work as it *actually exists*. The contemporary approach substitutes measures of job satisfaction for Marx's more expansive conception of alienation. Related concepts include job commitment, effort bargaining, and, conversely, resistance. In the political sphere voting behavior and a sense of political efficacy have emerged as central empirical indicators of underlying alienation from society's power structures. Theories of alienation, as exercises in social philosophy, help to keep alive questions about the future of society by envisioning possible alternatives that do not yet exist. Such exercises are necessary if the social sciences are to retain a transformative potential beyond the tyranny of *what is* and toward *what could be*.



SEE ALSO: Anomie; Capitalism; Labor Process; Marx, Karl

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RANDY HODSON

### American Sociological Association

The American Sociological Association (ASA), founded in 1905, is the largest and most influential organization of professional sociologists in the USA. In 1959, the organization's original name was formally changed from the American Sociological Society (ASS) to its current moniker, the American Sociological Association. In 2009, the ASA reported some 14,000 dues-paying members and operating investments valued at approximately \$4.6 million. A comprehensive, independent history of the organization has yet to be written.

The first ASS presidents comprised the major white male intellectual architects of what became the American sociological tradition. The pioneering work of the ASS is chronicled in the *Papers and Proceedings of the American Sociological Association* (1906–28) and the *American Journal of Sociology* (*AJS*). The *AJS*, founded in 1895 by Albion W. Small at the University of Chicago, served as the voice of the ASS until 1935 when the ASS membership established a separate journal, the *American Sociological Review* (*ASR*). Today, the ASA publishes several journals, including *Footnotes*, the organization's professional newsletter. Since 1963, the day-to-day bureaucratic operations of the association are administered by an Executive Officer and an ever-growing paid staff, now housed in Washington, DC. In consequence, the annually-elected ASA presidents have become less responsible for ordinary bureaucratic tasks and the ASA executive office has itself become a consequential force in shaping and promoting the public image of disciplinary sociology in the United States.

Whereas the ASA is national in scope, several regional, state and special interest organizations provide more focused, more accessible and often more convivial professional sociological outlets. Many sociologists participate in both the ASA and one (sometimes more) of the smaller sociological organizations or regional societies. Some smaller organizations work alongside or within the ASA while others thrive as fully separate and sometimes competitive entities.

SEE ALSO: Sociology

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MICHAEL R. HILL

### Americanization

The term “Americanization,” which broadly deals with American influence on something, has multiple specific meanings. Within the USA, Americanization has been most prominently understood in relation to immigrant acculturation, or immigrants’ adoption of US cultural norms and values. This Americanization concept was at its most popular in the early twentieth century. A large influx of immigrants had arrived to the USA between the 1870s and the 1920s, and the rapid growth of the foreign-born population caused concern that these newcomers would maintain their heritage culture rather than adopting US ways. World War I increased nationalist fervor and thus led to a heightened sense of nativism; immigrant cultures and languages were seen as not only deficient but also threatening, and “Americanization” of immigrants was therefore understood as imperative. However, this Americanization sentiment lessened following the 1924 immigration restrictions. It further decreased in popularity with the post-World War II-era’s codification of human rights and with the increasing permissibility of cultural distinction following the civil rights era. Today, speaking of “Americanizing” immigrants is often seen as unacceptable and culturally biased.

Outside of the USA, Americanization has been most commonly used to signify the spreading of US cultural, political, and economic norms and practices to other nations. This understanding of Americanization is thus related to globalization and westernization. Though exact contents and processes of this “Americanization” are broad and oft-debated, US political influences have included the spreading of democracy, particularly during the cold war era; economic influences have included deregulation and free market principles; and cultural influences have included concepts of individualism and specific US cultural products, such as music, television, and film. While US practices and culture have sometimes been adopted voluntarily by other nations, Americanization has also been seen as hegemonic and forcibly imposed due to the USA’s economic and political power. Americanization has thus been seen, at varying times and by varying actors, as both a positive and negative phenomenon.

SEE ALSO: Assimilation; Cultural Imperialism; McDonaldization

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JESSICA SPERLING

### **anarchism**

Anarchism signifies the condition of being without rule. Anarchism, then, has often been equated with chaos. This interpretation was lent weight by the period of anarchist “propaganda by deed” towards the end of the nineteenth century. For most anarchists, though, their political allegiances involve opposition to the intrusiveness, destructiveness, and artificiality of state authority, the rejection of all forms of domination and hierarchy, and the desire to construct a social order based on free association. Anarchism is, however, a heterogeneous political field, containing a host of variations – for instance, organization versus spontaneity, peaceful transition versus violence, individualist versus collectivist means and ends, romanticism versus science, and existential versus structural critique of domination.

Although anarchism has been traced back, say, to millenarian sects of the Middle Ages, anarchism is properly a nineteenth-century ideology and movement, and anarchists are perhaps best remembered through Marx’s encounters with Max Stirner, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Mikhail Bakunin. Nevertheless, anarchism and communism were not clearly distinguished as varieties of socialism until the period after the Second International. From this time onwards, Marxists equated anarchism with extreme individualism, with opposition to any form of organization or authority, and with mistakenly taking the state (instead of capital) as primary in understanding exploitation and domination.

In the twentieth century, anarchism provided the underpinnings of larger movements and rebellions – for instance, revolutionary syndicalism (the trade unions as revolutionary weapons and models of a future social order) in strongholds such as France, Spain, and Italy; and the collectivization of land and factories during the Spanish Civil War. MIT linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky is probably the best-known contemporary representative of this strand of anarchist thought.

Between 1914 and 1938, anarchism as an ideology and a movement went into serious decline.

However, it was widely viewed as at least implicit in the counter-cultural opposition of the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, “primitivist” anarchists connected modernity’s obsessions with science and progress with the domination of human beings and nature and with the loss of authenticity and spontaneity. For some, poststructuralism has strong anarchist resonances – underscoring difference against totalizing and scientific Marxian theory and politics, decentralist, and attentive to the micro-operations of power. Finally, the anti-globalization movement is sometimes said to represent a “new anarchism,” opposing neoliberal capitalism and statism, decentralist and localist in its aims, and characterized by openness and by “horizontal” organizational tendencies.

SEE ALSO: Capitalism; Communism; Socialism

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CHAMSY EL-OJEILI

### **animal rights movement**

The animal rights movement, which emerged in the 1970s, seeks to end the use of animals as sources of food and experimental subjects. It has challenged traditional animal welfare which seeks to eliminate the unnecessary suffering of animals. Strategically, the animal rights movement is characterized by its willingness to engage in grass-roots campaigning and activism which, at its extremes, has included, sometimes violent, forms of direct action.

General arguments employed to explain the emergence of the animal rights movement include those based on post-material values, occupation and gender, the latter being seen as particularly appropriate not least given that a preponderance of animal rights activists are women.

Other explanations provide room for the independent explanatory validity of people’s genuine concern for animals and what is done to them. This includes the influence of a radical philosophy for animals, and particularly work by Singer (1975) and Regan (1984), greater knowledge of their capabilities, and increasing coverage of animal issues in the media.

SEE ALSO: New Social Movement Theory; Social Movements

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ROBERT GARNER

**anomie**

Anomie refers to the lack or ineffectiveness of normative regulation in society. The concept was first introduced in sociology by Émile Durkheim (1893) who argued, against Marx, that the division of labor brings about problematic consequences only under exceptional circumstances, either because of a lack of regulation or because the level of regulation does not match the degree of development of the division of labor. In his famous study on suicide, Durkheim (1897) relied on the anomie perspective to introduce the anomic type of suicide. Anomic suicide takes place when normative regulations are absent, such as in the world of trade and industry (chronic anomie), or when abrupt transitions in society, such as fiscal crises, lead to a loss in the effectiveness of norms to regulate behavior (acute anomie).

Durkheim's anomie concept was expanded by Robert K. Merton (1968), who argued that a state of anomie occurs as a result of the unusually strong emphasis in US society on the dominant cultural goals (individual success) without a corresponding emphasis on the legitimate means (education, work) to reach those goals. Anomie refers to the resulting demoralization or deinstitutionalization of legitimate norms.

Following Merton's work, anomie became among the most applied concepts in American sociology during the 1950s and 1960s. Theoretically, anomie was perceived among non-Marxists as a useful alternative to alienation. In matters of empirical research, an important development was Leo Srole's concept of anomia, which refers to the social-psychological mental states of individuals who are confronted with social conditions of anomie. Caught in the polarization between micro and macro perspectives, the theoretical relation between anomia and anomie has not yet been adequately addressed.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the concept of anomie was much less discussed. Since the late 1980s, however, there has been a revival of the anomie concept in at least two areas of inquiry. First, Merton's perspective of anomie and social structure is now widely recognized as one of the most influential contributions in criminological sociology. The theoretical approach has now

been broadened as comprising an anomie theory (of social organization) as well as a strain theory (of deviance). In contemporary criminological sociology, strain theory is much more influential than anomie theory.

Second, Durkheim's anomie concept is applied in research on societies undergoing rapid social and economic change, such as many of the eastern European countries since the collapse of communism. It remains to be seen if and how this renewed concept of anomie will integrate with the related literature on globalization and inequality that is traditionally rather hostile toward Durkheimian and functional-structuralist theories. Perhaps a new integrated perspective can emerge that will transcend the prior dichotomies between anomie and rival concepts such as alienation.

SEE ALSO: Alienation; Durkheim, Émile; Merton, Robert K.; Norms; Structural Functional Theory

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MATHIEU DEFLEM

**ANOVA (analysis of variance)**

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique for detecting differences among the means of groups within a sample. It is one of several techniques of the "general linear model."

In the basic case, a sample is divided into groups based on values of one discrete independent variable with a small number of categories. Within each group, the means for a second variable, the dependent variable, are calculated. The difference in the means for the different groups is compared to the variation of the individual cases within each group around that group's mean. The larger the difference in the means (relative to the variation around each mean), the more likely it is

that the means are significantly different, and the less likely that one would make a type I (alpha) error by saying that the groups have different means in the population from which the sample is drawn.

Key to ANOVA, the F statistic comprises the ratio of the mean squared error between groups and the mean squared error within groups. The larger the difference between means of each group, the larger the F ratio is (holding constant the variation around the individual means). The larger the variation around each individual mean, the smaller is the F ratio (holding constant the difference between the means for each group). To make reliable inferences about the population based on the sample, ANOVA assumes: the sample was drawn randomly from the population, and the distribution of the dependent variable around the mean(s) is normal, not skewed in either direction.

F ratios are distributed in a family of curves based on the degrees of freedom for the between group means (number of groups of the independent variable minus one) and the degrees of freedom within groups (number of individual cases minus the number of values of the independent variable).

SEE ALSO: General Linear Model; Statistical Significance Testing

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PAUL T. MUNROE

## anti-war and peace movements

While many people in the USA are only aware of anti-war and peace movements from the 1960s and 1970s period of social unrest, these movements have been in existence since long before. Peace and anti-war movements are social movements that concentrate on a variety of issues related to violence, armed conflict, war, domination and oppression. The goals of the movements vary according to the dominant issue of the moment as well as the time and place in which they exist. For example, while there is an active international anti-nuclear arms movement, these efforts rarely receive mainstream attention in the USA.

Common themes of anti-war and peace groups range from ending a specific conflict to the abolition of war, the elimination of weapons as well as the creation of non-violent mechanisms to solve conflicts; such as through the creation of

government sponsored committees or departments dedicated to peace rather than defense. Tactics utilized by these groups vary and often mirror the ideology of the group. Non-violent approaches include large boycotts, protests, hunger strikes, sit-ins, speeches, letter-writing campaigns, lobbying politicians, voting, education, and outreach. Others have used violence such as self-immolation, the destruction of property and even assassination as a mechanism to end war.

People and groups resist war and armed conflict for a wide variety of reasons such as economic exploitation, violation of human rights, destruction of property, environmental harm, the immorality of killing, the ideological justifications for war as well as the financial costs. Individuals may work individually or organize their own local groups, join larger national groups and work within educational and religious institutions to advance their cause. As our consciousness expands globally, strategies for change have become more transnational with groups around the world organizing to protest and disrupt meetings of world leaders to draw attention to situations they believe are unjust. The emergence of the Internet and other advances in technology has provided a new means of coalition building, which has been expanded as it is easier to reach people around the globe. For example, when the USA was preparing to invade Iraq in 2003, the peace movement was able to organize simultaneous protests of millions of people around the world.

While anti-war and peace movements are often successful in influencing public debate and beliefs about armed conflict and current military actions, rarely have they been able to stop wars. For example, the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s galvanized the nation and created enough pressure on government officials to change their actions concerning the war. Part of this success was the number of people within government and politics who were openly against the war and worked to end it as soon as possible. Successful change arises out of a combination of people working within and outside of social and political institutions. One key element helping end the Vietnam War was the media coverage of the protests and of the war itself. More recent conflicts and peace movement activities have not had the same level of support thus making the efforts of the anti-war movement more challenging due to the invisibility of their efforts or of war itself, in the mainstream media.

SEE ALSO: Social Movements; War

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KRISTINA B. WOLFF

## arcades

Originating in Paris in the 1820s, arcades were decorative passages or walkways through blocks of buildings. Glass-roofed and supported by ornate ironwork columns, arcades formed interior streets; sites of conspicuous consumption for the wealthy, and places of spectacle for the poor. Hemmed in by concession stands and eclectic emporia, arcade shop fronts offered the observer a visual experience of illuminated shop-signs, *objets d'art*, and a cornucopia of commodities from around the world. Sociologically speaking, the importance of the Parisian arcades lies in their role as progenitor of modern consumerism and more tangentially as a prototype of the contemporary shopping mall.

The unearthing of the arcade as a site of sociological and philosophical importance is closely associated with the German literary theorist, Walter Benjamin. Benjamin was fascinated by the arcades, “mythical” qualities, viewing them as both “threatening” and “alluring” – places in which the emotions were stimulated and where the spheres of public and private life were blurred and challenged. In *The Arcades Project* (*Das Passagen-Werk*), Benjamin viewed the arcades as a metaphor for the composition and dynamic form of modern industrial capitalism. He described arcade shop fronts as “dream houses,” where everything desirable becomes a commodity (frequently on the first floor of the arcades, sexual pleasures could be bought and drinking and gambling were common). For Benjamin, the continual flow of goods, the “sensual immediacy” of the displays, and the visual appeal of transitory fashions were all fragments of the “commodity fetish.” Yet while newness itself becomes a fetish, the modern commodity has a built-in obsolescence – the novel inevitably becomes the outmoded. This tension is apparent in the fate of the arcades themselves. Following Haussman’s “creative destruction” of Second Empire Paris in the 1860s, most of the arcades were destroyed to make way for the wide boulevards that characterize Paris today.

Likewise, by the time of Benjamin’s research, the arcades had largely been superseded by the modern department store with its more rationalized forms of mass urban consumption. However, surviving examples of original arcades can still be found in Paris today.

SEE ALSO: Benjamin, Walter; Cathedrals and Landscapes of Consumption

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KEITH HAYWARD

## asceticism

The concept of asceticism shows the unity of efforts through which an individual desires to progress in his moral, religious and spiritual life. The original meaning of the term refers to any exercise, physical, intellectual or moral, practiced with method and rigor, in hopes of self-improvement and progress. Notwithstanding the great flexibility that characterizes the application of asceticism, the concept always alludes to a search towards perfection based on the submission of the body to the spirit, recalling the symbolic distinction between exterior and interior life.

Following the evolution of the concept of asceticism within different historical and social contexts, it is possible to see its strategic importance within the social sciences, especially in regard to understanding the western world. Aside from the combination of physical and intellectual exercises, which have always had their own social relevance, asceticism refers to the complex relationship between nature and culture, as well as to the classic religious relationship between faith and reason; such aspects are the fruit of a continual and dynamic negotiation that develops within concrete social and cultural contexts.

Far from disappearing, asceticism is present even in the contemporary world, and not only in the context of oriental religious and experiences, such as some practices of Hinduism and Buddhism. While in a strictly religious sphere, new forms of asceticism could be tantric practices or yoga. Deborah Lupton (1996) relates asceticism to the issue of food and the awareness of the body and Enzo Pace (1983) puts it in the context of political activism.



SEE ALSO: Body and Society; Buddhism; Hinduism; Sexuality, Religion and

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GIUSEPPE GIORDAN

## asch experiments

Solomon Asch (1907–96) conducted pioneering social psychological experiments on group conformity, and processes of person perception. His conformity experiments are of particular importance. In these experiments, college students were told they were participating in a study on visual perception (by matching the length of one line to three others). In truth, the experiment was intended to measure the extent of conformity to group norms and perceptions, even when those norms/perceptions conflicted with their own interpretation of reality. After a series of confederates intentionally gave incorrect answers in the experiment, approximately one-third of the participants conformed to these incorrect answers in a majority of trials. Approximately one-fourth refused to conform in any of the trials. And, while the majority of individual responses given in the experiment reflected independence from the group, a clear majority (approximately three-fourths) of the participants displayed a capacity to engage in this extreme form of conformity at least once during the course of the experiment. Asch's conformity experiments had a huge impact on the early development of social psychology, and served as inspiration for numerous future studies, including Milgram's research on obedience and Zimbardo's mock prison study at Stanford University.

Asch also conducted experiments on person perception that had an equally profound impact on the early theoretical development of social psychology. These experiments on *central* and *peripheral* personality traits led to a deeper understanding of how impressions of others are formed and structured.

SEE ALSO: Authority and Conformity; Milgram, Stanley (Experiments); Zimbardo Prison Experiment

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WILLIAM J. KINNEY

## assimilation

Assimilation is reemerging as a core concept for comprehending the long-run consequences of immigration, both for the immigrants and their descendants and for the society that receives them.

This new phase could be described as a second life for a troubled concept. In its first life, assimilation was enthroned as the reigning idea in the study of ethnicity and race. In the USA, where the theoretical development of assimilation mainly took place, this period began with the studies of the Chicago School in the early twentieth century and ended not long after the canonical statement of assimilation theory, Milton Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life*, appeared in the mid-1960s. In this first phase, assimilation did double duty – on the one hand, as popular ideology for interpreting the American experience and, correlatively, an ideal expressing the direction in which ethnic and racial divisions were evolving in the USA; and, on the other, as the foundational concept for the social scientific understanding of processes of change undergone by immigrants and, even more, the ensuing generations.

One profound alteration to the social scientific apparatus for studying immigrant-group incorporation is that it is no longer exclusively based on assimilation. Very abstractly, three patterns describe today how immigrants and their descendants become “incorporated into,” that is, a recognized part of, an immigration society: the pattern of assimilation involves a progressive, typically multi-generational, process of socioeconomic, cultural, and social integration into the “mainstream,” that part of the society where racial and ethnic origins have at most minor effects on the life chances of individuals; a second pattern entails racial exclusion, absorption into a racial minority status, which implies persistent and substantial disadvantages vis-à-vis the members of the mainstream; a third pattern is that of a pluralism in which individuals and groups are able to draw social and economic advantages by keeping some aspects of their lives within the confines of an ethnic matrix (e.g., ethnic economic niches, ethnic communities).

SEE ALSO: Acculturation; Immigration; Whiteness

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RICHARD ALBA AND VICTOR NEE

**attitudes and behavior**

The role of attitudes in guiding behavior is an enduring social psychological concern. Two explanatory paradigms have emerged. One approach is grounded in positivism and deductive theorizing. The other is inductive and phenomenological, emphasizing process and construction.

Gordon Allport in the mid-1930s (1935: "Attitudes"), articulated the positivist approach, when he defined attitudes as mental states which direct one's response, placing attitudes in a causal, directive role. This laid the groundwork for a deductive, scientific approach to the relationship between attitudes and behavior. Attitudes were intrapersonal, psychological tendencies expressed through favorable or unfavorable evaluation of objects.

This approach has dominated contemporary research. Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in the Theory of Reasoned Action have become the most widely known exemplars of this approach. Their four-stage, recursive model posits that attitudes explain behavioral intentions, if it is not coerced and nothing else intervenes. The core assumption is consistency. Attitudes are conceptualized as generic, transsituational, psychological expressions that guide behavior across circumstances.

Attitudes, because they are mental constructs present a measurement problem. Attitude scaling techniques were developed to address this problem. Techniques developed by Likert, Thurstone, Guttman, and Osgood have become the backbone of attitudinal data collection strategies. The common core of all attitude measurement is asking questions out of context to reveal these internal sentiments.

Some researchers, such as Fishbein, discourage the measurement of behavior, opting instead for the measurement of behavioral intention. This allows surveys to be the primary measurement tool for both attitudes and behavioral intentions. Through questions, respondents are asked to reveal what they intend to do or what they have done. Although a causal relationship is hypothesized, designs allow for the simultaneous measurement of attitudes and behavior.

The phenomenological approach also emerged early, most notably in the works of Thomas and

Znaniecki (1918: *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*) and Faris (1928: "Attitudes and behavior"). In this approach attitudes and behaviors are interpersonal, not intrapersonal, phenomena. Social context is central to understanding the ways in which attitudes and behavior come together. This approach assumes that attitudes and behavior and thus their relationship are complex and situational.

Blumer challenged the very idea of a bivariate, objective, intrapersonal conceptualization of these concepts. For him the key to understanding the relationship between mental conceptualizations and actions was the actor's definition of the situation. Actors continually interpret and reinterpret the situations in which they find themselves, in order to create and coordinate their actions with others.

This line of thinking was extended by Deutscher and his collaborators (1973; 1993). By reviewing and critiquing the extant attitude-behavior work, they conclude that a situational approach, in which social actors construct behavior and give it meaning in social situations, is what is needed. They emphasize that "it's what's in between attitude and behavior" that counts. Situations are open, indefinite, and subject to continuous interpretation, reinterpretation and modification by the social actors embedded in them. People imbue situations with meaning, then act on the basis of that meaning. Behavior is constructed in concert with others, not solely by individuals.

Attitudes are important for understanding both behavior and its change. Relevant studies appear in almost every field of sociology, including law, criminology, family, and substance use. Given the affective and motivational nature of attitude conceptualization, work in the sociology of emotions, motive, and language have relevance for understanding the complexity of this relationship and resolving some of these intellectual disputes in understanding the relationship between thoughts and actions.

SEE ALSO: Definition of the Situation; Psychological Social Psychology; Social Cognition; Social Psychology

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FRANCES G. PESTELLO

## attribution theory

There is no one theory of attribution; rather, several perspectives are collectively referred to as attribution theory. Attribution theory attempts to elucidate how people explain human behaviors by inferring the causes of those behaviors. Fritz Heider (1958) provided the building blocks for developing attribution research. He proposed that in their search for causal structures of events, people attribute causality either to elements within the environment or to elements within the person. He noted that people tend to overestimate the role of internal causes, such as attitudes, when explaining others' behavior. Further, he assumed that people tend to make an internal attribution of causes if they view an action as intentionally caused.

Correspondence inference theory identifies the conditions under which an observed behavior can be said to correspond to a particular disposition or quality within the actor. The process of correspondence inference works backward and is divided into two stages: the attribution of intention and the attribution of dispositions. Another important contribution to attribution research is Kelley's (1967) theory of covariation analysis which is concerned with the accuracy of attributing causes to effects. His theory in the essay "Attribution theory in social psychology" hinges on the principle of covariation between possible causes and effects. Three types of information are utilized to make causal attribution: consensus, distinctiveness, and consistency. Consensus refers to whether all people act the same way toward the same stimulus or only the observed person. Distinctiveness concerns whether the observed person behaves in the same way to different stimuli. Consistency refers to whether the observed person behaves in the same way toward the same stimulus over time and in different situations. The attribution to personal or environmental factors depends on the combination of these qualities.

Bernard Weiner's (1986) theory of achievement and emotion focuses on the emotional and behavioral consequences of the attribution process. This theory proposes three dimensions of perceived causality: the locus of the cause (within the person versus outside the person), the stability of the cause

(stable versus unstable), and the controllability over the cause (controllable versus uncontrollable). The resultant emotions depend on the type of attribution that observers make. Weiner differentiated between two groups of affects. First, "outcome-dependent" affects which are experienced as a result of the attainment or non-attainment of a given outcome, and not by the cause of that outcome. The second group is called "attribution-linked" affects which are experienced as a result of appraisal and assignment of a cause.

In the process of making attributions, people make mistakes by either overestimating or underestimating the impact of situational or personal factors when explaining their behaviors or the behaviors of others. These errors are termed biases in attribution. Correspondence bias, also called fundamental attribution error, is one of them which refers to observers' tendency to exaggerate or overestimate the influence of dispositional factors when explaining people's behavior.

SEE ALSO: Accounts; Labeling Theory; Stigma; Stratification

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ABDALLAH M. BADAHDAH

## authoritarian personality

The authoritarian personality is a psychological syndrome of traits that correlates highly with outgroup prejudice. Three personality traits in particular characterize the syndrome: deference to authorities, aggression toward outgroups, and rigid adherence to cultural conventions. Thus, authoritarians hold a rigidly hierarchical view of the world.

Nazi Germany inspired the first conceptualizations. The Frankfurt School, combining Marxism, psychoanalysis, and sociology, introduced the syndrome to explain Hitler's popularity among working-class Germans. Social psychologists soon demonstrated the syndrome in the USA. In 1950, the

major publication by Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, appeared. The product of two German refugees and two US social psychologists from Berkeley, this publication firmly established the concept in social science. Its easily administered F (for fascism) Scale led to an explosion of more than 2,000 published research papers. Critics disparaged the work on political, methodological, and theoretical grounds.

Methodological critics unearthed a host of problems. The most important objection concerned the 1950 study's neglect of the social context. Authoritarianism rises in times of societal threat, and recedes in times of calm. Crises invoke authoritarian leadership and encourage equalitarians to accept such leadership. Moreover, the syndrome's link to behavior is strongly related to the situational context in which authoritarians find themselves.

Nonetheless, research throughout the world with various measures shows that authoritarians reveal similar susceptibilities. In particular, high scorers favor extreme right-wing politics and exhibit prejudice against outgroups. This remarkable global consistency of results suggests that the authoritarian personality is a general personality syndrome with early origins in childhood that center on universal issues of authority and security. A plethora of theories attempt to define the personality type and its origins. The original Berkeley theory stressed the effects of a stern father in early life. Later formulations emphasize the syndrome's focus on strength and weakness, its intense orientation to the ingroup, and the importance of modeling of authoritarian behavior by parents.

SEE ALSO: Authoritarianism; Authority and Conformity; Authority and Legitimacy; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School

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THOMAS F. PETTIGREW

## authoritarianism

The concept of authoritarianism has been used mainly to refer to a type of authority whose power is exercised within diffuse legal, institutional, or de facto boundaries that easily leads to arbitrary acts against groups and individuals. Those who are in power are not accountable to constituencies and public policy does not derive from social consent.

Within sociology and political science, particularly within comparative politics, authoritarianism has

been understood as a modern type of political regime. This notion has had an important conceptual development since the 1970s, which clarified some ambiguities within political analyses that tended to mix up this type of regime with fascism and other forms of totalitarianism. The concept of authoritarianism has included a range of regimes, from personal dictatorships such as Franco's in Spain in the 1930s, hegemonic party regimes like the Mexican regime founded after the 1910 revolution, and the military governments of South America established during the 1960s and 1970s. The context in which this type of regime was founded was generally a protracted situation of instability such as a revolution (Mexico), a civil war (Spain), a democratic crisis (Chile), and deterioration of the economy and political polarization (Argentina). Most countries where an authoritarian regime was founded had neither a liberal democratic rule nor an opportunity to develop a state of law, and the construction of the nation was mediated not primarily by the concept of the citizen but rather by the notion of "the people."

Authoritarianisms are political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism; without elaborate ideology, but with distinctive mentalities; without extensive or intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development; and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined, but actually quite predictable, limits.

SEE ALSO: Authority and Legitimacy; Fascism; Modernization; Populism

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ESPERANZA PALMA

## authority and conformity

A common phenomenon in social groups (some would say a requirement) is the existence of authority: the right or power to give orders and enforce standards. Authority is only meaningful if people comply with those rules and orders. Conformity, compliance with orders and standards, is the corollary to authority.

Macro-level perspectives tend to focus on *authority*. Because authority is a characteristic of a position in society it can be thought of as a structural component, although cultural transmission

passes on the meanings that go with a position of authority. Max Weber's discussion of the types of legitimate authority is a classic example. Recent studies in this area examine the economic authority of multinational corporations, the political authority of state actors, the effects of religious authority on mass movements, as well as the conflicts created when these forms of authority meet head-on in the process of globalization.

Micro-level perspectives tend to focus on *conformity*, seeking to explain why people comply with the orders of authority or the standards of the group. Experiments by Asch, Milgram, and Zimbardo demonstrated the ease with which a person could be induced into making choices that person knew to be false or unethical. The "Utrecht studies" replicated these classic findings and helped identify the conditions that produce resistance to conformity. Studies in social influence take a more generalized approach to conformity by applying general theories of behavior like social identity theory. Conformity to group standards is viewed in this perspective as one outcome of group membership. Identity theories provide an individual-level theoretical mechanism for conforming behavior, namely the motivation to have one's environmental inputs align with one's definitions of self. People conform because to do otherwise is to invite a heightened level of psychological discomfort as a person becomes aware that they are not acting on their self-meanings.

SEE ALSO: Authority and Legitimacy; Milgram, Stanley (Experiments); Rational Legal Authority; Social Identity Theory; Zimbardo Prison Experiment

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MARK KONTY

## authority and legitimacy

Authority is often defined as legitimate power, and contrasted to pure power. In the case of legitimate authority, compliance is voluntary and based on a belief in the right of the authority to demand compliance.

Max Weber provided a famous classification of forms of legitimate authority in terms of the defining type of legitimating belief. Weber identifies four distinct "bases" of legitimacy, three of which are directly associated with forms of authority. The fourth – value-rational faith – legitimates authority indirectly by providing a standard of justice to which particular earthly authorities might claim to correspond. The forms of authority are charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal. Each of these forms can serve on its own as the core of a system of domination. Traditional authority is based on unwritten rules; rational-legal authority on written rules. Unwritten rules may be justified by the belief that they have held true since time immemorial, while written rules are more typically justified by the belief that they have been properly enacted in accordance with other laws. Charismatic authority is command which is not based on rules. What the charismatic leader says overrides and replaces any written rule.

Charismatic authority originates in the extraordinary qualities of the person holding this authority, not in another source, such as the will of the people.

SEE ALSO: Democracy; Legitimacy; Power Elite; Representation; Weber, Max

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