

Robert K Merton

In 2019, MIT hosted a 75th birthday symposium in honor of Robert C. Merton. The event included presentations by students and colleagues explaining the influence Merton has had on the profession and on their ideas. Each presenter focused on a specific aspect of Merton’s life and contributions so that the audience could gain a full picture of Merton’s influence while avoiding repetition across presentations. The brief contains edited transcripts of some of the speeches and panel discussions that took place at the symposium. The presentations cover Merton’s career, highlighting both his foundational work on continuous time finance and the functional approach to understanding organizations as well as recent work on retirement security and trust. Some of the presentations unveil new aspects of his life. Merton’s father, Robert K. Merton, was one of the most important sociologists of the 20th century, being the originator of concepts such as role model, unanticipated consequences, and self-fulfilling prophecies. Another of the presentations makes a convincing case for Merton as the first financial engineer; the presenter argues that a body of knowledge becomes a science when a field of engineering emerges from it. If that is the case, this brief achieves two goals. It celebrates the influence of Merton on the theory and practice of finance through a series of engaging presentations, and it traces the birth of finance as a science on its own.

Introduction -- Defining the public interest in the US and European patent systems -- Confronting the questions of life-form patentability -- Commodification, animal dignity, and patent-system publics -- Forging new patent politics through the human embryonic stem cell debates -- Human genes, plants, and the distributive implications of patents -- Conclusion

A discussion of the social and physical contexts and consequences of urban life.

Puritanism, Pietism, and Science

The Routledge International Handbook of Talcott Parsons Studies

A Shandean Postscript

The Urban Experience

Contemporary Social Problems

Talcott Parsons was the leading theorist in American sociology—and perhaps in world sociology—from the 1940s to the 1970s. He created the dominant school of thought that made "Parsonian" a standard description of a theoretical attempt to unify social science, as reflected in the fact that his contributions to the discipline cover a range of issues, including medicine, the family, religion, law, the economy, race relations, and politics—to name but a few. This volume brings together leading scholars working in the field of "Parsonian Studies" to explore the background of Parsons ’ s work, the content of his oeuvre, and his subsequent influence. Thematically organized, it covers Parsons ’ s contributions and impacts in areas including the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences; cultural sociology; personality, mental illness, and psychoanalysis; and economics and political and economic sociology. In addition, it considers his influence in different areas of the world and on particular students, and offers insights into the Parsonian tradition ’ s practical application to contemporary social issues. An authoritative, comprehensive, and in-depth critical assessment of the Parsonian legacy, The Routledge International Handbook of Talcott Parsons Studies will appeal to scholars across the social sciences and in sociology and social theory in particular, with interests in the history of sociology and the enduring relevance of Talcott Parsons.

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

This Handbook brings together a collection of leading international authors to reflect on the influence of central contributions, or classics, that have shaped the development of the field of public policy and administration. The Handbook reflects on a wide range of key contributions to the field, selected on the basis of their international and wider disciplinary impact. Focusing on classics that contributed significantly to the field over the second half of the 20th century, it offers insights into works that have explored aspects of the policy process, of particular features of bureaucracy, and of administrative and policy reforms. Each classic is discussed by a leading international scholars. They offer unique insights into the ways in which individual classics have been received in scholarly debates and disciplines, how classics have shaped evolving research agendas, and how the individual classics continue to shape contemporary scholarly debates. In doing so, this volume offers a novel approach towards considering the various central contributions to the field. The Handbook offers students of public policy and administration state-of-the-art insights into the enduring impact of key contributions to the field.

The Handbook of the History and Philosophy of Criminology

Mass Persuasion

Theoretical and Empirical Investigations

Race, Inequality, and the Testing of New Pharmaceuticals

Patent Politics

Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) was one of the most influential sociologists of the twentieth century, producing clear theories and innovative research that continue to shape multiple disciplines. Merton’s reach can be felt in the study of social structure, social psychology, deviance, professions, organizations, culture, and science. Yet for all his fame, Merton is only partially understood. He is treated by scholars as a functional analyst, when in truth his contributions transcend paradigm. Gathering together twelve major sociologists, Craig Calhoun launches a thorough reconsideration of Merton’s achievements and inspires a renewed engagement with sociological theory. Merton’s work addressed the challenges of integrating research and theory. It connected different fields of empirical research and spoke to the importance of overcoming divisions between allegedly pure and applied sociology. Merton also sought to integrate sociology with the institutional analysis of science, each informing the other. By bringing together different aspects of his work in one volume, Calhoun illuminates the interdisciplinary and unifying dimensions of Merton’s approach, while also advancing the intellectual agenda of an increasingly vital area of study. Contributors: Aaron L. Panořsky, University of California; Alan Sica, Pennsylvania State University; Alejandro Portes, Princeton University; Charles Camic, Northwestern University; Charles Tilly, Columbia University; Craig Calhoun, Social Science Research Council and New York University; Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, City University of New York; Harriet Zuckerman, Mellon Foundation; Peter Simonson, University of Colorado; Ragnvald Kalleberg, University of Oslo; Robert J. Sampson, Harvard University; Thomas F. Gieryn, Indiana University; Viviana A. Zelizer, Princeton University

Written and compiled by friends and former students, The Idea of Social Structure honors Robert K. Merton, considered one of the premier sociologists of the twentieth century. Along with Talcott Parsons and Marion J. Levy, Merton was emphatic in his use of the term "social structure"—however different they were in defining and refining the term. The chapters in this volume address many of Merton’s diverse sociological theories and, in turn, his theories’ impact upon a very large sociological territory. The volume includes major statements on the context of working with Merton by Lewis A. Coser, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Robert A. Nisbet, and Seymour Martin Lipset, as well as memorable statements covering Merton’s interests in the sociology of knowledge and science, planning communities, medical education, relative deprivation, everyday life, political roles, and communication media. This is a powerful sourcebook for understanding the work of Merton and of his intellectual successors. Nisbet called the decade of the 1930s among the most vital and creative periods in American history. It was certainly a period of intense struggle—political, military, and ideological. But the formation of modern sociology was without question one of the crowning achievements in the scientific evolution of the century. The volume is sharply focused on Merton’s work and deeply appreciative of the nature of his contribution. It is a landmark effort in the study of sociology as history.

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The Anthem Companion to Robert K. Merton

Robert K. Merton: A Companion

Adverse Events

An Episodic Memoir

The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive

This volume offers scholars of sociology and allied areas the fruits of an international conference on the contributions of the eminent Robert K. Merton. The assessment, as good in content as well as in participants, took place in Amalfi, Italy, with the participation of Merton himself and under the auspices of the Italian Sociology Association. Carlo Mongardini aptly summarizes the unique impact of Merton on the social theory of our century. "His strength as a classic writer lies in his balance, unveiling complexity, and in his humanism which looks beyond the apparent simplicity and coherence of social reality." A special treat is the final chapter by Merton reviewing "Unanticipated Conse-quences and Kindred Sociological Ideas." In it, he ranges from the historical an-tecedents of the concept to his own evolution in the use and expansion of the idea. Merton approaches the development of his thought as installments rather than sim-ple evolution, and in so doing gives us unique insight into how he built upon his originating notions in the context of social science as it existed in the United States. Tensions between integrating scholarship and reaching the general public provide a special insight into Merton that might prove new even to those who know his work well. Contributors to this original volume include: Volker Meja, Nico Stehr, Paolo Ammassari, Gianni Statera, Birgitta Nedelmann, Harriet Zuckerman, Piotr Sztompka, Peter Gerlich, Charles Crothers, Elena Besozzi, and Arnold Zongnerle, among others. The chapters address the full range of Merlon’s work, with special emphasis on such areas as anomie, structural analysis, the relationship of theory to research, patterns of latent and manifest influence, and even the application of Mertonian concepts to the analysis of Merton as a scholar. This unusual compendium, translated from the Italian, will interest social researchers across the academic spectrum.

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

The old saying does often seem to hold true: the rich get richer while the poor get poorer, creating a widening gap between those who have more and those who have less. The sociologist Robert K. Merton called this phenomenon the Matthew effect, named after a passage in the gospel of Matthew. Yet the more closely we examine the sociological effects of this principle, the more complicated the idea becomes. Initial advantage doesn’t always lead to further advantage, and disadvantage doesn’t necessarily translate into failure. Does this theory need to be revisited? Merton’s arguments have significant implications for our conceptions of equality and justice, and they challenge our beliefs about culture, education, and public policy. His hypothesis has been examined across a variety of social arenas, including science, technology, politics, and schooling, to see if, in fact, advantage begets further advantage. Daniel Rigney is the first to evaluate Merton’s theory of cumulative advantage extensively, considering both the conditions that uphold the Matthew effect and the circumstances that cause it to fail. He explores whether growing inequality is beyond human control or disparity is socially constructed and subject to change. Reexamining our core assumptions about society, Rigney causes us to rethink the sources of inequity.

Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays

Perspective and Program

Sociology of Science and Sociology as Science

Papers in Honor of Robert K. Merton

The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration

A reissue of the classic report of Columbia’s Bureau of Applied Social Research, outlining techniques for eliciting specific responses of individuals and groups to particular events and situations. The 1956 edition of this book may be regarded as seminal within sociology, spawning a whole field of qualitative opinion research that has continued to evolve through half a century of inquiry. This is a reissue of the book, with a new preface by Merton, a select bibliography of writings on the focused interview and focus group research, and a new introduction that traces the diffusion of Merton’s technique from sociology to other fields, including history, psychology, mass media and marketing research.

A parody of scholarly essays traces the origins of Newton’s famous quotation and examines the history of ideas

Explores the social inequality of clinical drug testing and its effects on scientific results Imagine that you volunteer for the clinical trial of an experimental drug. The only direct benefit of participating is that you will receive up to \$5,175. You must spend twenty nights literally locked in a research facility. You will be told what to eat, when to eat, and when to sleep. You will share a bedroom with several strangers. Who are you, and why would you choose to take part in this kind of study? This book explores the hidden world of pharmaceutical testing on healthy volunteers. Drawing on two years of fieldwork in clinics across the country and 268 interviews with participants and staff, it illustrates how decisions to take part in such studies are often influenced by poverty and lack of employment opportunities. It shows that healthy participants are typically recruited from African American and Latino/a communities, and that they are often serial participants, who obtain a significant portion of their income from these trials. This book reveals not only how social inequality fundamentally shapes these drug trials, but it also depicts the important validity concerns inherent in this mode of testing new pharmaceuticals. These highly controlled studies bear little resemblance to real-world conditions, and everyone involved is incentivized to game the system, ultimately making new drugs appear safer than they really are. Adverse Events provides an unprecedented view of the intersection of racial inequalities with pharmaceutical testing, signaling the dangers of this research enterprise to both social justice and public health.

The Matthew Effect

Concepts and the Social Order

Introductory Studies in the Sociology of Medical Education

The Student-Physician

The Idea of Social Structure

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

Additional Contributors Are George N. Shuster, Detlev W. Bronk, Lewis Galantiere, Alfred A. Knopf, Archibald MacLeish, And Leo Rosten.

"The exploration of the social conditions that facilitate or retard the search for scientific knowledge has been the major theme of Robert K. Merton’s work for forty years. This collection of papers [is] a fascinating overview of this sustained inquiry. . . . There are very few other books in sociology. . . . with such meticulous scholarship, or so elegant a style. This collection of papers is, and is likely to remain for a long time, one of the most important books in sociology."—Joseph Ben-David, New York Times Book Review "The novelty of the approach, the erudition and elegance, and the unusual breadth of vision make this volume one of the most important contributions to sociology in general and to the sociology of science in particular. . . . Merton’s Sociology of Science is a magisterial summary of the field."—Yehuda Elkana, American Journal of Sociology "Merton’s work provides a rich feast for any scientist concerned for a genuine understanding of his own professional self. And Merton’s industry, integrity, and humility are permanent witnesses to that ethos which he has done so much to define and support."—J. R. Ravetz, American Scientist "The essays not only exhibit a diverse and penetrating analysis and a deal of historical and contemporary examples, with concrete numerical data, but also make genuinely good reading because of the wit, the liveliness and the rich learning with which Merton writes."—Philip Morrison, Scientific American "Merton’s impact on sociology as a whole has been large, and his impact on the sociology of science has been so momentous that the title of the book is apt, because Merton’s writings represent modern sociology of science more than any other single writer."—Richard McClintock, Contemporary Sociology

Social Research and the Practicing Professions

How Advantage Begets Further Advantage

Patents

Robert K. Merton, an Intellectual Profile

Studies in the Scope and Method of "The American Soldier."

"This book provides students, scholars, and criminologists with a truly a global perspective on the theory and practice of criminology throughout the centuries and around the world. In addition to chapters devoted to the key ideas, thinkers, and moments in the intellectual and philosophical history of criminology, it features in-depth coverage of the organizational structure of criminology as an academic discipline world-wide"--- Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

Offers a comprehensive perspective on knowledge production in the field of sociology. Moreover, it is a tribute to the scope of Merton’s work and the influence Merton has had on the work and life of sociologists around the world. This is reflected in each of the 12 chapters by internationally acclaimed scholars witnessing the range of fields Merton has contributed to as well as the personal impact he has had on sociologists. This approach is in itself a tribute to Merton: an analysis of knowledge production through a contextualized review of an author’s life-work – a quintessentially "Mertonian" enterprise.

Focused Interview

Robert K. Merton and the Future of Sociology

On the Shoulders of Giants

The Sociology of Science

Official Gazette of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

This book reintroduces the work of Robert K. Merton as a bridge between classical sociology and modern sociology. Founded in the sociological classics but developing a modern approach to the advancement of theory and research methodology, Merton's thought helped to construct modern sociology in its coverage of many of the social institutional areas of contemporary society. Recovering and analysing the system of 'structural analysis', which Merton progressively developed - a system largely overlooked due to the tendency among commentators to stereotype him as a 'functionalist' - the author considers the applications of this approach to various substantive fields, particularly science and criminal justice, and examines the effect of Merton's later 'sociological semantics' on his overall schema. A clear and accessible presentation of the array of concepts introduced by Merton to sociology, Reintroducing Robert K. Merton will appeal to scholars and students with interests in sociological theory, social research, the history of sociology and the various substantive areas covered in the work of Merton - deviance, science, and communications.

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

"A pioneering study by the noted sociologist Robert K. Merton of the techniques of propaganda, through an enquiry into a day-long radio appeal for the sale of war bonds during the 2nd World War."

Reintroducing Robert K. Merton

Robert K. Merton

A Study in Sociological Semantics and the Sociology of Science

Science, Technology & Society in Seventeenth-century England

The Travels and Adventures of Serendipity

This book reintroduces the work of Robert K. Merton as a bridge between classical sociology and modern sociology. Founded in the sociological classics but developing a modern approach to the advancement of theory and research methodology, Merton's thought helped to construct modern sociology in its coverage of many of the social and analysing the system of 'structural analysis', which Merton progressively developed - a system largely overlooked due to the tendency among commentators to stereotype him as a 'functionalist' - the author considers the applications of this approach to various substantive fields, particularly science and criminal justice, and examines his overall schema. A clear and accessible presentation of the array of concepts introduced by Merton to sociology, Reintroducing Robert K. Merton will appeal to scholars and students with interests in sociological theory, social research, the history of sociology and the various substantive areas covered in the work of Merton - deviance,

Robert K. MertonSociology of Science and Sociology as ScienceColumbia University Press

Robert K. Merton (RKM's) sociological work spans several decades: 1920s (i.e., childhood), 1930s (anomie, science, unanticipated), 1940s (housing studies, mass communications, structural-functional analysis, professions, focus groups), 1950s (reference groups), 1960s (ambivalence), and later-decades (structural analysis, sociological semantics) to sociology during a period when several specialties were being set-up and yet his work spans both general and specialist sociologies. He is recognised as the father of anomie/strain theory; focus groups; sociology of science; role-set theory; analytical sociology; structural-functional analysis; ambivalence studies; and sociological semantics threads of sociology together. RKM stood at the junction of many other crossroads: classical and modern sociology; US and European sociology; theory and research; philosophy of social science and applied sociology; pure academic sociology and applied sociology; cognitive and social; social sciences and humanities; social sciences and sciences relate to each other. RKM had a major effect on the baby boomer generation of sociology who joined the ranks of sociology at a time of great expansion of university positions across many developed countries. Other generations since have been less exposed to his work.

Social Structure and Anomie

Social Theory and Social Structure

Robert K. Merton and Contemporary Sociology

On Theoretical Sociology

Life Forms, Markets, and the Public Interest in the United States and Europe