

Robert K Merton Social Theory And Social Structure

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, cultural sociology). He particularly contributed 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, but always endeavoured to keep the multifarious 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 science. Yet the different components of RKM's work 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

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work.

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

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.

Sociology of Science and Sociology as Science

The Post-Italianate Edition

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Focused Interview

A Study in Sociological Semantics and the Sociology of Science

An Episodic Memoir

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

"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 Institutions play a pivotal role in structuring economic and social transactions, and understanding the

foundations of social norms, networks, and beliefs within institutions is crucial to explaining much of what occurs in modern economies. This volume integrates two increasingly visible streams of research—economic sociology and new institutional economics—to better understand how ties among individuals and groups facilitate economic activity alongside and against the formal rules that regulate economic processes via government and law. Reviews "This volume is a welcome addition to the expanding literature on institutional analysis. . . . Besides sociologists, we are afforded the pleasure of contributions from anthropologists, economists, historians, political scientists, and scholars located in schools of law and education. . . . One of the pleasures of the volume is the wide range of topics, times, and locales addressed by the authors. . . . In all these diverse situations, the application of institutional queries and approaches enhances our understanding and appreciation of the endlessly rich and diverse nature of social life."—Contemporary Society "This

admirable book makes a strong contribution to institutional theory, has many excellent chapters . . . and is a model for interdisciplinary exchange and cross-fertilization. . . . It is dense with interesting ideas and points for debate, and I heartily recommend it. □ ***Sociological Research Online***

A Shandean Postscript

On Theoretical Sociology

Bending the Law of Unintended Consequences

Theory in Action

Sport and Modern Social Theorists

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

This book reintroduces the work of Robert K. Merton as a bridge between classical sociology and modern sociology. Founded in

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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.

American Sociological Theory: A Critical History discusses the history of American sociological theory by providing a selective and critical account of ten writers largely involved in the subject. Chapters 1 to 10 of this book are devoted to the contributions and investigations of ten acclaimed sociological theorists— William Graham Sumner, Lester Frank Ward, Charles Horton

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Cooley, Edward Alsworth Ross, Florian Znaniecki, Robert Morrison MacIver, Pitirim A. Sorokin, George A. Lundberg, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton. The sociological label, legacy of Spencer, normative taboo, American references, and the "Holy Trinity" (Marx, Durkheim, and Weber) are also elaborated in this text. This publication is a good reference for students and researchers conducting work on general sociological theory.

Robert K. Merton, an Intellectual Profile
Theories of Deviance

How Advantage Begets Further Advantage

Theoretical Constructionism

The Idea of Social Structure

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

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

The author, seeing science as a social activity, directs our attention to the problems of the social control of science. He discusses the sense in which science as a social activity is

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planned and unplanned.

Robert K. Merton and Contemporary
Sociology

A Critical History

American Sociological Theory

Robert K. Merton

Social Theory and Social Structure Simon and
Schuster

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

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Theoretical and Empirical Investigations

Reintroducing Robert K. Merton

Papers in Honor of Robert K. Merton

A Test-Drive Method for Critical Decision-Making in Organizations

The New Institutionalism in Sociology

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.

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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

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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.

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

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Merton's densely populated stable. He has created a jeu d'esprit which is profoundly suggestive both in detail and as a whole."—Sean French, *Times Literary Supplement*

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.

Science and the Social Order
The Matthew Effect
The Intellectual Insights of Robert K. Merton

SOCIAL THEORY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE.
Social Structure and Social Theory

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The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory presents a comprehensive, interdisciplinary compendium of original entries focusing on the origins, evolution, and global development of contemporary social theory. Presents a comprehensive, interdisciplinary overview and analysis of all aspects of social theory Features more than 850 in-depth, original entries contributed by international experts Includes all major theories, theorists, schools of thought, disciplines, debates, doctrines, developments, epistemologies, and methodologies relating to the development of modern social theory Brings in concepts from contemporary cultural studies, feminism, post-secularism, and postmodernism Explores controversial contemporary debates relating to the clash of civilization, environmentalism, post-colonialism, post-humanism, cyborgs, and the life-extension project

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

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

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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.

Toward the Codification of Theory and Research

Robert K. Merton's "Social Theory and Social Structure", Chapter 3, Part 1

Social Research and the Practicing Professions

On the Shoulders of Giants

Social Structure and Anomie

Late one afternoon in the fall of 1976, we were sipping Sanka and speculating on the possible directions towards which research and theory in organizational science might lead. One of us had just re-read Walter Nord's Marxist critique of Human Resource Management, and the discussion evolved into an enumeration of the many articles that had appeared in the recent literature attacking the discipline, its mission, and its methods. In no time the list was long enough to suggest that a number of

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scholars, both young and established, were dissatisfied with the rate of progress begun in the accumulation of knowledge about organizations. The critics we identified were located at many different schools, and they were associated with diverse research traditions and biases. The causes they identified as underlying the problems they cited varied, as did the solutions they offered. We decided to pursue these polemics with a view to seeking commonalities among them, hoping that if there were any dominant common themes, it might be possible to anticipate the directions the field could take. Our reading and thinking led us to the conclusion that many of the issues being raised by the critics of the discipline could be seen as disagreements over some implicit (or ignored) metaphysical and epistemological assumptions about organizations. We hypothesized that much of the controversy resulted from a lack of consensus regarding what organizations are and how knowledge about them can be developed.

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

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not quite by accident--is today ubiquitous. This book traces the word's eventful history from its 1754 coinage into the twentieth century--chronicling along the way much of what we now call the natural and social sciences. The book charts where the term went, with whom it resided, and how it fared. We cross oceans and academic specialties and meet those people, both famous and now obscure, who have used and abused serendipity. We encounter a linguistic sage, walk down the illustrious halls of the Harvard Medical School, attend the (serendipitous) birth of penicillin, and meet someone who "manages serendipity" for the U.S. Navy. The story of serendipity is fascinating; that of *The Travels and Adventures of Serendipity*, equally so. Written in the 1950s by already-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,

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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.

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.

Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays

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And Social Structure

**Middle Range Theory and the Study of
Organizations**

**"Social Theory and Social Structure", Part 3
: Translation with a Survey of the English
Sociological Terms and Their Dutch
Equivalents**

Contemporary Social Problems

**The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social
Theory, 5 Volume Set**