

<<社会学>>

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内容概要

这是一部畅销二十多年的教科书。

第6版为社会学概论课建立了新的规范。

该书适合大学一年级学生适用，并有助于培养新一代的社会学家。

本书的基调是将社会学视为在现代思想文化中的扮演着核心的角色以及在社会科学中占据着中心位置的学科。

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其中, “第三条路”(Third way)的思想影响了英国等国家的政策。

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章节摘录

In contrast to many symbolic interactionist, phenomenological and ethn omethodological studies, the work of Max Weber appears to sit much more closely to the mainstream of sociology. Although he certainly was interested in social interactions and the micro level of social life, Weber's work on world religions, economic sociology and legal systems was also historically informed, strongly comparative in orientation and concerned with the overall development and direction of the modern world. This is in contrast to the interactionist tradition as it developed after Weber's death, which has become rather more exclusively focused on the micro level during the twentieth century.

Theoretical dilemmas Controversies sparked by the work of the classical theorists, as well as by the later theoretical ideas and perspectives discussed above, continue today. But since the time of the classical sociologists, it has become commonplace to argue that their work, and that of sociology in general, has set up a series of theoretical dilemmas. There are several basic theoretical dilemmas - matters of continuing or recurring controversy or dispute - which these clashes of viewpoint bring to our attention, some of which concern very general matters to do with how we should interpret human actMties and social mstitutions. In short, these are questions about how we can or should 'do' sociology. We shall outline four such dilemmas here.

1 One dilemma concerns human action and social structure. The issue is the following: how far are we creative human actors, actively controlling the conditions of our ownlives? Or is most of what we do the result of general social forces outside our control? This issue has always divided, and continues to divide, sociologists. Weber and the symbolic interactionists, for example, stress the active, creative components of human behaviour. Other approaches, such as that of Durkheim and functionalism, emphasize the constraining nature of socialinfluences on our free actions.

2 A second theoretical controversy concerns consensus and conflictin society. Some standpoints in sociology, as we have seen - including functionalism emphasize the inherent order and harmony o-f human societies. Those taking this view regard continuity and consensus as the most evident characteristics of societies, however much they may change over time. Other sociologists, such as Marxists, accentuate the pervasiveness of social conflict. They see societies as plagued with divisions, tensio ns and struggles. To them, it is illusory to claim that people tend to live amicably with one another most of the time; even when there are no open confrontations, they say, there remain deep divisions of interest, which at some point are liable to break out into active conflicts.

3 There is a third basic theoretical dilemma which hardly figures at all in the orthodox traditions of sociology, but which cannot be ignored. This is the problem of how we are to incorporate a satisfactory understanding of gender within sociological analysis. The founding figures of sociology were all men, as we saw in chapter 1, and they paid virtually no attention to the fact that human beings are gendered. Even those women who were involved in sociology were, until recently, largely neglected. In the works of the early male sociologists, human individuals appear as if they were 'neuter' - they are abstract 'actors', rather than differentiated women and men. Since we have verylittle to build on in relating issues of gender to the more established forms of theoretical thinking in sociology, this is perhaps, at the current time, the most acutely difficult problem to grapple with.

One of the main theoretical dilemmas associated with gender is the following: should we build 'gender' as a general category into our sociological thinking? Or, alternatively, do we need to analyse gender issues by breaking them down into more specific influences affecting the behaviour of women and men in different contexts? We can put this in another way: are there characteristics that separate men and women, in terms of their identities and social behaviour, in all cultures? Or are gender differences always to be explained mainly in terms of other differences which divide societies (such as class divisions)?

4 A fourth problem concerns not so much the general characteristics of human behaviour or of societies as a whole, but rather features of modern social development. It is to do with the determining influences affecting the origins and nature of modern societies, and derives from the differences between nonMarxist and Marxist approaches. The dilemma centres on the following issue: how far has the modern world been shaped by the economic factors which Marx singled out - in particular, the mechanisms of capitalist economic enterprise? How far, on the other hand, have other influences - such as social, political or cultural factors - shaped social development in the modern era? These controversies are so fundamental for

sociological theory that we shall consider the different ideas developed about them in some detail. Social structure and human action

A major theme pursued by Durkheim, and many other sociologists since, is that the societies of which we are members exert social constraint over our actions. Durkheim argued that society has primacy over the individual person. Society is far more than the sum of individual acts; it has a 'firmness' or 'solidity' comparable to structures in the material environment. Think of a person standing in a room with several doors. The structure of the room constrains the range of her or his possible activities. The siting of the walls and the doors, for example, defines the routes of exit and entry. Social structure, according to Durkheim, constrains our activities in a parallelway, setting limits to what we can do as individuals. It is 'external' to us, just as the walls of the room are. This point of view is expressed by Durkheim in a famous statement: When I perform my duties as a brother, a husband or a citizen and carry out the commitments I have entered into, I fulfil obligations which are defined in law and custom and which are external to myself and my actions. Similarly, the believer has discovered from birth, ready fashioned, the beliefs and practices of his religious life; if they existed before he did, it follows that they exist outside him. The systems of signs that I employ to express my thoughts, the monetary system I use to pay my debts, the credit instruments I utilize in my commercial relationships, the practices I follow in my profession, etc. - all function independently of the use I make of them. (1982 [1895])

Although the type of view Durkheim expresses has many adherents, it has also met with sharp criticism. What is 'society', the critics ask, if it is not the composite of many individual actions? If we study a group, we do not see a collective entity, only individuals interacting with one another in various ways. What we call 'society' is only an aggregate of many individuals behaving in regular ways in relation to each other. According to the critics, including most sociologists influenced by symbolic interactionism, as human beings we have reasons for what we do, and we inhabit a social world permeated by cultural meanings. Social phenomena, according to them, are precisely not like 'things': but depend on the symbolic meanings with which we invest what we do. We are not the creatures of society, but its creators. It is unlikely that this controversy will ever be fully resolved, since it has existed since modern thinkers first started systematically to try to explain human behaviour. Moreover, it is a debate which is not just confined to sociology, but preoccupies scholars in all fields of the social sciences. You must decide, in the light of your reading of this book, which position you think more nearly correct. Yet the differences between the two views can be exaggerated. While both cannot be wholly right, we can fairly easily see connections between them. Durkheim's view is clearly in some respects valid. Social institutions do precede the existence of any given individual; it is also evident that they exert constraint over us. Thus, for example, I did not invent the monetary system which exists in Britain. Nor do I have a choice about whether I want to use it or not if I wish to have the goods and services that money can buy. The system of money, like all other established institutions, exists independently of every individual member of society, and it constrains the activities of each individual. On the other hand, it is obviously mistaken to suppose that society is 'external' to us in the same way that the physical world is. For the physical world would go on existing whether or not any human beings were alive, whereas it would plainly be nonsensical to say this of society. While society is external to each individual taken singly, by definition it cannot be external to all individuals taken together.

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