**SOCIOLOGY 1 READING SUMMARIES**

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**Main**

Durkheim – Suicide

The health of the individual depends on the perfect balance of integration and regulation within an institution. Too much integration leads to altruistic suicide, whereas too little leads to egoistic suicide. Too much regulation leads to fatalistic suicide and too little integration leads to anomic suicide. There is a concern over modern times and how society seems to point toward too little integration.

Durkheim – Elementary forms of Religion

Societal skeletons and institutional structure can be extrapolated by studying religions and how they attract followers. Religions at the basal level are about protecting the sacred from the profane and devoting human lives toward this goal. Like religion, society derives its power over individuals from their respect of society’s moral authority. Moral authority is gained through strength of voice, rather than reason.

Goffman – Asylums

Total institutions are involuntary institutions that strip its members of individuality, identity, respect, choice, freedom, and sense of self. Prisons and asylums are places this can be seen directly, especially with the guard/prisoner dichotomy. Those in total institutions go through two adjustments: primary adjustments include adjusting the self to the regulations of the institution, whereas secondary adjustments include developing social systems within the total institution to preserve a sense of autonomy and personhood

Bellah – The Good Society

Institutions are defined as a pattern of expected actions enforced by social sanctions, both positive and negative. The concept of institutions in America is foreign, but Americans are engrained in institutions, as institutions shape individuals, form conduits of interaction with others, and define personal futures and histories. Involvement in institutions puts us at the mercy of institutions, but becomes a way to live fulfilling lives. Institutions are frameworks for concrete organizations to base themselves upon

Acemoglu & Robinson – Why Nations Fail

Individual success in society is nurtured by inclusive economic institutions which allow and encourage participation by the masses to make best use for their talents and skills that enable the freedom of choice. These institutions use national resources to support individual efforts including efficient infrastructure, funding, and creating inclusive markets. The political institutions in inclusive economic institutions are centralized and pluralistic. Exclusive economic institutions are exactly the opposite and consolidate power in the elite at the expense of stifling economic progress and political constancy.

Thelen – Varieties of Capitalism

Liberal market economies (LMEs) common with the Anglo-Saxon world are characterized by a lack of wage regulations, a lack of power of centralized unions, the market setting wages, an open system of higher education, and higher inequality. Coordinated market economies (CMEs) common with many European countries are characterized by centralized wage regulations and bargaining, specialized education, and low inequality. After the economic crash of the 70s, CMEs responded in many ways including deregulation, flexiblization, and dualization.

Schalet – The Culture of Sex

Culture conceptualizes, controls, and constitutes the individual in the world. The US and Netherlands have different approaches to teenage sex. The US adopts various cultural frameworks, including hormone-based, battle between sexes, and parent controlled. The Dutch adopt different cultural frameworks including self-regulated, normal, and relationship-based sexuality. The US frameworks support adversarial individualism, which encourages breaking of social ties and dependencies to achieve individuality and meaningful relationships. The Dutch frameworks support interdependent individualism, which encourages developing autonomy through interdependence.

Davis & Moore – Principles of Stratification

A generally rejected thesis on stratification. Davis and Moore ask the question, “Why is there inequality?” They argue that Inequality is functional for society, which rewards the most important jobs that are good for societies. Those who have the necessary talent and skills are rewarded in the occupations they hold, and that provides status and inequality. Talent to hold certain positions is rare, so those positions are highly rewarded. The argument has several problems, including ambiguity with “valuable” skills, lack of maximizing skills, and unequal distribution of resources that allow equal opportunities for growth and mobilization.

Weber – Class, Status, Party

One has power when one can realize their will over another. People are in the same class when they have the same life chances and are in the same market. A status group is different from a class in that it is based on equivalent honor; status groups hoard privileges and monopolize resources to forward their group. A caste is a status group that is enforced on a group, converting the identities of their members to that of the caste. Parties are goal-oriented groups that are sometimes oriented toward one or another social group.

Marx – Communist Manifesto

The bourgeoisie class helped usher in capitalism from feudalism via an expansion of world market, a redefined system of honor, urbanization, and globalization, leaving the proletariat class to take up abysmal work and sell themselves piecemeal to the proletariat. Marx sees the proletariat as the future key class, as they are a vocal majority who could organize and overpower the bourgeoisie. Communism is distinguished by bringing proletariat interests into the forefront: (1) abolishing property, (2) heavy progressive income tax, (3) abolish inheritance, (4) confiscate property, (5) centralize credit, (6) centralize communication and transport, (7) extend factories and instruments of production, (8) Equal liability of all to labor, (9) combine agriculture with manufacture, (10) free education for children.

Marx – Upheaval

Marx had a two-pronged theory of upheaval based on materialism and determinism driving history forward. There is a predicted outcome for means of production and social relations of production from feudalism to capitalism to communism. Marx describes the social division of labor where several individuals cooperate no matter what conditions or to what end, as well as natural division of labor where a multitude of productive forces determines the nature of society, where society is not voluntary, but naturally divided. Marx argued that a division of labor led to poor work skills, removing the proletariat from means of production as a means of social control.

Lareau – Unequal Childhoods

Children develop in different ways in different classes within different societies. Middle class families raise their children under concerted cultivation, which stresses organization, speaking up, and contestation, leading to entitlement. Lower class families raise their children under accomplishment of natural growth, stressing obedience, more times with friends and families, and dependence on institutions. These frameworks are defined by the different social structures that reproduce different cultural logics, leading to social inequality. The logics also reinforce behaviors that minimize class mobility. These differences are mirrored by the differences in schools.

Harding – Living the Drama

Within institutions, there is a sense of social solidarity and accountability to each other’s actions. Neighborhoods each have different frames to view the world in, each influenced by the environment and each influencing values, children, and ways to view society: whether through a positive or negative lens. Neighborhoods also have scripts that prescribe how to solve problems and achieve goals. There are many problems with cultural heterogeneity including model shifting, dilution, and simultaneity.

Fischer – Inequality by Design

Invisible practices that impact inequality include those designed to aid the middle and rich classes through subsidizing them. The EITC program attempted to reduce inequality by reimbursing the poorer classes, but only did so for families with employed heads of households. Redlining was used to block racial segregation of blacks into middle-class white neighborhoods to preserve “racial integrity” of a neighborhood, and caused denials of blacks for FHA/VA loans. Between 1977 and 1990, the gap between the rich and the poor increased 20%. Inequality decreased in Europe through centralized wage-setting practices. Education expansion floods the market with educated workers, giving them less power over wages; subordination sometimes results, leading to poorer performance because of socioeconomic depravation, segregation, and stigma of inferiority. In many societies, there is subordination of “lesser” cultures resulting in inferior opportunities and persistent destitution of opportunity.

Whitt – Urban Elites and Mass Transportation

Whitt’s theses can be interpreted from three different power theories: Elitist (power is centralized in the hands of the three institutional elites: business, military, and state), Pluralistic (assorted interest groups that are short lived are competing for power and influence), and Class-Dialectic (power is concentrated in the dominant class holding power of capitalist institutions). The elitist theory is pessimistic about a more egalitarian society. Each theory has a different unit of analysis, with elitist theory focusing on institutional elites, pluralist theory focusing on interest groups and individuals, and class-dialectic focusing on social classes.

Hacker & Pierson – Winner-Take-All Politics

The turning point in contemporary American politics came with Reagan and the politics of organized combat. The politics of organized combat shifts attention to what government does and away from elections. Reagan politics shifted toward more deregulation of transportation and energy and a tax bill benefiting the wealthy. Politicians are more likely to listen to upper class demands. Power of voters comes from education and organization, which the less privileged populace lacks. Healthcare reform demonstrates the role of “organized combat” via concessions to special interests in the bill. Overall, the relationship between political and economic system shows the political system is weighted toward elites.

Willer – Overdoing Gender

When men’s masculinity is threatened, men attempt to overcompensate by moving toward extreme actions and beliefs of hegemonic masculinity. Women on the other hand, do not show any signs of significant change when their femininity is threatened, possibly because femininity is less socially respected and narrowly defined. This was determined through 4 studies: (1) feedback of femininity/masculinity followed by surveys, (2) desire to advance in social hierarchies, (3) threatened social changes to the status of men, and (4) higher basal testosterone levels compared to overcompensation.

Brooks and Manza – A Broken Public?

Rather than increase public demands for government, as predicted by Macro Polity Theorists, recession contributes to lessened support of American government. According to Macro Polity Theorists, apathetic populations are inconsequential to the representation of politics as a whole. Political partisanship tends to be the largest contributing factor to the public’s changes in policy attitude. Supporters of a party will continue to support even if economic performance is poor. Political identity can be stronger than political news.

Star – Remedy and Reaction: Health Care Reform

The healthcare system is difficult to change because of so many interest groups supporting the status quo, mistrust in government, and complexity of the issue. Progress can happen if president and congress work together to push legislation. Large businesses have it easier than small businesses because cost of insuring small businesses are proportionately much higher and they lack knowledge and purchasing power. Existence of the voluntary healthcare market allows insurers power over coverage. The most basic question about healthcare that Americans disagree about: is healthcare a right or a good to be earned?

Kirsch – Fighting for Our Health

Through grassroots pressuring, calling, TB campaign, surveys, partnering with existing orgs, and canvassing, Health Care For America Now was able to get enough awareness and power to make an influence in the debate over universal healthcare. There was big small business and public support for HCAN, but the power behind their voice required much organization, resources, and active support to harbor any effect. With so many different powers attacking the bill, many concessions had to be made. There is significant evidence to support three theories, with power concentrated in the policymakers, grassroots organizers and lobbyists, or capitalist monopolizes.

Villareal – “Political Compeition and Violence in Mexico”

Pre-PRI Mexico was dominated by a hierarchical system of governance, with local leaders (caciques) governing with authoritarian tendencies. Post PRI, they helped consolidate power, but the patronage system did not last. As shown with Mexico’s political history, in societies characterized by patronage relations, an increase in electoral competition will result in higher rates of homicidal violence. In societies with hierarchical forms of societal organization, social and political changes that undermine the source of unequal exchange between actors lead to a loss of social control and violent crime.

**Minor**

Blau & Duncan – The American Occupational Structure

The appropriate way to measure socioeconomic mobility is through looking at the father’s occupation at 16 and comparing it to occupation now. The findings show a

Sharone – Flawed System/Flawed Self

Israeli men view unemployment to be a fault of the government whereas US men view unemployment to be a fault of their own: results of two different social frameworks of culture: how the cultures of each inform how they should interact with the world.

Pager – Marked

Whites with criminal records were still favored in the job market for callbacks over blacks with no criminal record; however, when black candidates were interviewed, they were seen favorably because of how they go against the stereotype.

Jenks – Inequality

Does difference between schools make a difference? No as it turns out: schools have similar class sizes and textbooks. Schools artificially create differences with GPA, allowing all a chance to move up and be the best. This increases mobility within the confines of each school.`

Hans – Differences between schools

Differences between educational growth and success between schools happens during the summer, when middle class children enrich their learning, whereas poorer class children fall behind.

Huntingtion – US Government and Iraq

The US attempted to establish a democracy in Iraq after invading, but because Iraq didn’t have the institutional support for the political institution, it didn’t succeed

Skocpol – States and Social revolutions

Social revolutions are aided by the breakdown of state. Inputs from organized groups (votes, organization, rallying) can be transmuted through political institutions into outcomes.

Lieberman – AIDS epidemic and ethnic diversity

Brazil had a better response toward the AIDS epidemic versus South America because of their hegemonic and accepting views toward race and identity.

Page – Watts Rioters

Those who join riots tend to be the more educated with higher political efficacy.