
Long-term Developmental Processes in the Perspective of Historical Sociology

1) Time frames as processes in sociology:

Norbert Elias' concept of long-term social processes. Karl Mannheim and the concept of the future. Synchronic vs diachronic approach. Braudel's 3 stages of time.

Describe and explain Norbert Elias' approach to long-term social processes.

2) Social geography:

Ways in which social relations, social identities and social inequalities are produced, their spatial variation, and the role of space in constructing them. Pitirim Sorokin and social mobility (horizontal or vertical). Emmanuel Wallerstein's concept of space-time. Anthony Giddens social systems in space time – example of the nation state.

Explain the following quote from Giddens:

“time and space are recombined to form a genuinely world-historical framework of action and experience”

3) Economic processes

Theories of human development: Braudel, Wallerstein, Marx, Weber, Gellner etc.

Explain Wallerstein's world-system theory in relation to 'core' and 'periphery' countries.

How does Marx's theory of alienation relate to Marxist stage theory?

4) Violence, militarism and power

Violence within sociology. Anthony Giddens – the nation-state and violence. Norbert Elias – transformation of violence from medieval to modern. Foucault – changes in punishment of crime and prison. Lewis Coser – Functions of social conflict (positive and negative). Michael Mann – networks of power.

Give one of Coser's possible solutions to non-realistic conflict.

How does Michael Mann's theory of the development of 'multi-power-actor-civilizations' compare to the theory of state formation described by Norbert Elias?

5) Human knowledge

Knowledge as social production and contextual. Rationalism versus empiricism. Language as a social system. Karl Mannheim – ideology and relational truth. Michel Foucault – classical vs modern episteme and knowledge. Gellner's structure of human history. Daniel Bell – end of ideologies.

How does Daniel Bell view the similarities between ideologies and religion?

Why does Charles Percy Snow view the loss of contact between the humanities, arts and literature, and science and technology as a problem? How does Ulrich Beck develop this perspective further?

6) The Civilising Process

Norbert Elias and process sociology.

How does Norbert Elias' approach to historical sociology bridge the divide between the 'individualist' and 'holist' approaches to social theory?

Explain how sociogenesis and psychogenesis are related.

7) Civilisational differentiation

Social ecosystem theory. Francis Fukuyama – the end of history. Samuel Huntington's 7 great civilisations. Johannes Pall Arnason – civilisation as singular and plural. Jaroslav Krejčí's theocentric, anthropocentric, cratocentric, tanatocentric, psychocentric and cosmocentric paradigms.

How does Arnason distinguish between singular and plural theories of civilisation?

Explain one of Krejčí's four civilizational paradigms.

8) Individualisation

Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Max Weber, George Simmel

Emile Durkheim – the division of labour and individuality. Individualism vs holism debate. Norbert Elias and Mozart. Durkheim and the homo duplex.

Explain Durkheim's concept of the individual in relation to archaic society.

How does Elias' metaphor of 'the coin and the stamp' answer the question of primacy of individual or society.

9) Social action

Hegel and unintended consequences. Merton and the unpredictability of individuals. Raymond Boudon's 'Effets pervers'. Jan Keller – society as unintended consequence.

Explain Merton's concepts of manifest and latent functions.

According to Jan Keller, do we live in a rational society?

10) How can 'risk society' and 'second modernity' be considered as a basis for thinking about the future?

Ulrich Beck - de-standardisation of employment, technological threats and risky freedoms. Modernizing processes as increasing individualisation and embedding of social roles lost in second modernity. Alvin Toffler's 'Future Shock'.