

## REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

**Title of Session:** The Origins of Modern and Contemporary Sociology

**Name of Session Convener(s):** *Shoji Ishitsuka*, Tokyo University of Information Sciences

**Chair:** *Shoji Ishitsuka*, Tokyo University of Information Sciences

**Comments:** -

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I) *From J.G. Frazer via B.K. Malinowski to G. Lukacs*

Shoji Ishitsuka, Tokyo University of Information Sciences

II) *New Assessments: Durkheim, Adorno and the Persistence of the Social*

Bjørn Schiermer, University of Copenhagen

III) *The Dynamics of Rational and Non Rational in the Process of Social Change and Disease of Contemporary Society: Pareto and Freud*

Federico D'Agostino, University of Rome III

IV) *Critique of Uncritical Reason: The Need for Changes in Exercising Power*

Mariusz Baranowski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

V) *S.N. Eisenstadt: The Challenge of Social Change*

Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Tel-Aviv University

**Session description:**

I think it's time that we try to trace *the origins of sociology*, the origins of modern and contemporary sociology, as it is necessary and very interesting to try to know the origins of human beings as homo sapiens, for example, because we - being humans - don't know them without examining them scientifically.

This session will thematise in terms of the origins of modern sociology such classic sociologists as Simmel, Durkheim, including social anthropologists, Frazer, Mauss and Malinowski, Lukacs, referring to Hegel and Marx, Pareto, Max & Alfred Webers, Mannheim, et.al. as well as the domains of modern sociology such as the sociology of religion, culture, power, social movements, etc. Equally, we will deal with contemporary classics in the same context of our session : Parsons, Homans, Merton, Schutz, the Chicago School, Elias, Eisenstadt, Touraine, Luhmann, Habermas, Bourdieu, Giddens and others.

In concluding this session we will set up a new space of investigation open to the sociological world as a thematization of the Origins of Modern and Contemporary Sociology giving to it a temporary synthesis for an open discussion.

**Abstracts:**

I) *From J.G. Frazer via B.K. Malinowski to G. Lukacs*

Shoji Ishitsuka, Tokyo University of Information Sciences

The organizer's short speech concerning the very theme of this session, referring one line of sociological development from J. G. Frazer's modern thematization about religion, science & technology and capitalism as well as focusing on his methodological phase of evolutionism via B.K. Malinowski's thematization of sexuality, taboo, and culture in general as well as paying an attention to his methodological orientation of functionalism to G. Lukacs's enterprise of social ontology as a base of sociological inquiries as well as its methodological connotations.

II) *New Assessments: Durkheim, Adorno and the Persistence of the Social*

Bjørn Schiermer, University of Copenhagen

The paper is guided by an attempt at actualisation: I hope to save impulses from Durkheim's sociology of religion for use in a critical social psychology qualified for a late modern context. It does so, however, by assessing one of the most important critiques of Durkheimian sociology: The critique mounted against Durkheim by Theodor Adorno. First, critically dialoguing with Adorno and Durkheim, the paper investigates the reasons why this task has been neglected. Secondly, it aims to sketch out in more detail

the basic features of a 'Durkheimian' social psychological perspective – never developed by Durkheim himself. Third, it seeks to foreground the critical empirical and theoretical potentials of this perspective.

### III) *The Dynamics of Rational and Non Rational in the Process of Social Change and Disease of Contemporary Society: Pareto and Freud*

Federico D'Agostino, University of Rome III

The paper will focus on the dynamics of rational and non rational exploring in a new light the contribution of Pareto to the structure of social action beyond the only interpretation of T. Parsons and confronting the concepts of logic and non logic action with the analysis of S. Freud on the role of the unconscious. It is possible to establish any connection between the concepts of residui and derivations developed by Pareto with the the dynamics of unconscious for the disease of our civilization and at the same time to use the processes of rationalization to make sense of the substratum layed in our culture and of its ground meanings. Probably in the symbolic construction of reality there is a meeting point for the interaction between so distant thinkers whose fortune has been unequal in developing the sociological and psychological analysis of modern society. The interest of the analysis is about the concept of residui in Pareto and to what extent they can fit not only in the social action but in the archeology of savoir of Foucault and the unconscious of Freud. At the same time the process of rationalization linked with the concept of derivation can be related not only with super ego and the ego of Freud, but also with the process of rationalization of M. Weber which ends up with the iron cage of bureaucracy and the irruption of charisma in the social fabric of reality.

### IV) *Critique of Uncritical Reason: The Need for Changes in Exercising Power*

Mariusz Baranowski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze and criticize the dominant discourse on power in the broad sense (Marx, Weber, Simmel), or – as some prefer in more recent times – on the political (Mouffe 2005, Schmitt 2007). The standard point of view, which stresses the so-called crisis of democracy (low voter turnout, civic disengagement etc.) seems not to correspond to today's socio-political reality, increasingly shaped by bottom-up initiatives (such as social movements or even less organized activities). My paper, based on theoretical and – to some extent – empirical insights, offers a critical look at the current institutional arrangements in the field of politics (Pareto, Mannheim, Rosanvallon), as a consequence of mass protests mainly in countries with established democratic tradition (but potentially more far-reaching). From the socio-political and socio-cultural point of view, forming and increasing critical attitudes towards authority, identified mostly with the government, public administration, or corporations, is a new form of political participation,

changing image of the public sphere and democracy in general (Touraine, Offe, Castells). But at the same time, there is a position that draws attention to the internal base of socio-political apathy, highlighting the severity of individualistic attitudes or lack of political will. The latter is a form of immanent ideology, which in fact actively shaping the organization of distrust, denying any form of questioning authority. The main task is to demystified the oppressive nature of power, recognized as democracy, which hinders any conclusive form of criticism. The criticism presented here is not to reject the democratic system at all, but rather the reconstruction it towards a more egalitarian and civic direction (which may sound a bit naive at the first glance, but is based on a rational basis).

*V) S.N. Eisenstadt: The Challenge of Social Change*

Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Tel-Aviv University

Social change was one of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt's major areas of interest. In his view, the possibility of innovation and change is not something external or accidental to any institutional system. It is given in the very nature of the process of institutionalization and in the working of institutional systems. He applies this principle of dialectical transformation to his analyses of the dynamics of civilizations and modernity. SNE elaborates typologies of social change according to their scope and impact. SNE perceives socio-historical transformations through an emphasis on the multiplicity and variety of forms that civilizations may adopt and where human agency and creativity play a major role. Hence, such developments are made possible by the emergence of new types of elite. It is in this perspective that SNE discusses inter-class and inter-elite struggles, demographic expansion, domestic and international difficulties of states. Among all variables taken into consideration, SNE's analyses favour cultural and ideological premises, which leaves a flavour of cultural determinism. Accordingly, SNE sees modernity as the emergence of a social reality where the legitimacy of the social order ceases to be taken for granted and becomes an existential *problématique* for people, as members of society. This perspective, which developed in Western societies in the context of given civilizational legacies, has not remained these societies' exclusive privilege but has quite rapidly conquered more and more spaces, intermingling everywhere with singular cultures. This is what qualifies for SNE's notion of multiple modernities. SNE, however, does not indicate anything that transcends modernity in the social world. Under this angle, the project of modernity can be seen as a variant of 'the end of history' theme. Modernity is not only 'on endless trial', but also 'on an endless trail'. Obviously, present-day globality, transnationalism and multiculturalism have tremendous influence on individuals - diasporans and non-diasporans – as well as on society. Their impact is generated by contradictory forces that bring about new situations and developments. These transformations raise the question whether they represent only a degree of change within a given reality or, more than that, are propelling society toward new horizons. In other words, are we now seeing signals heralding a new sequence of modernity or are they pointing out to a new era?