Appendix

Sociological Metatheorizing and a Metatheoretical Schema for Analyzing Sociological Theory

Appendix Outline

One recent development in sociological theory is the growth of interest in sociological metatheorizing. While theorists take the social world as their subject matter, metatheorists engage in *the systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theory* (Ritzer, 1991b; Ritzer, Zhao, and Murphy, 2001; Zhao, 2001, 2005). One goal of this Appendix is to look at the increase in interest in metatheorizing in sociology and at the basic parameters of this approach. The entire structure of this book rests on a specific set of metatheoretical perspectives I developed (1975a, 1981a). Thus, another objective of this Appendix is to present the metatheoretical ideas that inform the text. But first an overview of metatheorizing in sociology will be helpful.

Metatheorizing in Sociology

Sociologists are not the only ones to do meta-analysis (Bakker, 2007c), that is, to reflexively study their own discipline. Others who do such work include philosophers (Radnitzky, 1973), psychologists (Gergen, 1973, 1986; Schmidt et al., 1984), political scientists (Connolly, 1973), a number of other social scientists (various essays in Fiske and Shweder, 1986), and historians (Hayden White, 1973).

Beyond the fact that meta-analysis occurs in other fields, various kinds of sociologists, not just metatheorists, do this type of analysis (Zhao, 1991). We can group the types of meta-analysis in sociology under the heading "metasociology," which can be defined as *the reflexive study of the underlying structure of sociology in general, as well as of its various components*—substantive areas (for example, Richard Hall's [1983] overview of occupational sociology), concepts (Rubenstein's [1986] analysis of the concept of "structure"), methods (*metamethods,* for example, Brewer and

Hunter's [1989] and Noblit and Hare's [1988] efforts to synthesize sociological methods), data (*meta-data-analysis,*[1] for example, Fendrich, 1984; Hunter, Schmidt, and Jackson, 1982; Polit and Falbo, 1987; F. Wolf, 1986), and theories. It is the last item, *metatheorizing,* that concerns us in this Appendix.

What distinguishes work in this area is not so much the process of metatheorizing (or systematically studying theories, which all metatheorists do) but rather the nature of the end products. There are three varieties of metatheorizing, largely defined by differences in end products (Ritzer, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1992b, 2007b). The first type, *metatheorizing as a means of attaining a deeper understanding of theory* (M_U), involves the study of theory in order to produce a better, more profound understanding of extant theory (Ritzer, 1988). M_U is concerned with the study of theories, theorists, and communities of theorists, as well as the larger intellectual and social contexts of theories and theorists. The second type, *metatheorizing as a prelude to theory development* (M_P), entails the study of extant theory in order to produce new sociological theory. In the third type, *metatheorizing as a source of perspectives that overarch sociological theory* (M_O), the study of theory is oriented toward the goal of producing a perspective—one could say *a* metatheory—that overarches some part or all of sociological theory. (It is this type of metatheorizing that provided the framework used in constructing this book.) Given these definitions, let us examine each type of metatheorizing in detail.

1. The first type of metatheorizing, M_U, is composed of four basic subtypes. All of them involve the formal or informal study of sociological theory to attain a deeper understanding of it.

The first subtype, *internal-intellectual,* focuses on intellectual or cognitive issues that are internal to sociology. Included here are attempts to identify major cognitive paradigms (Ritzer, 1975a, 1975b; see also the discussion below) and "schools of thought" (Sorokin, 1928), more dynamic views of the underlying structure of sociological theory (L. Harvey, 1982, 1987; Wiley, 1979; Nash and Wardell, 1993; Holmwood and Stewart, 1994), and the development of general metatheoretical tools with which to analyze existing sociological theories and to develop new theories (Alexander et al., 1987; Edel, 1959; Gouldner, 1970; Ritzer, 1989, 1990a; Wiley, 1988).

The second subtype, *internal-social,* also looks within sociology, but it focuses on social rather than cognitive factors. The main approach here emphasizes the communal aspects of various sociological theories and includes efforts to identify the major "schools" in the history of sociology (Bulmer, 1984, 1985; Cortese, 1995; Tiryakian, 1979, 1986), the more formal, network approach to the study of the ties among groups of sociologists (Mullins, 1973, 1983), and studies of theorists themselves that examine their institutional affiliations, career patterns, positions within the field of sociology, and so on (Gouldner, 1970; Camic, 1992).

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[1] The (somewhat awkward) label "meta-data-analysis" is used to differentiate this from the more generic meta-analysis. In meta-data-analysis the goal is to seek ways of cumulating research results across research studies. In his introduction to Wolf's *Meta-Analysis*, Niemi defines *meta-analysis* as "the application of statistical procedures to collections of empirical findings from individual studies for the purpose of integrating, synthesizing, and making sense of them" (F. Wolf, 1986:5).

The third subtype, *external-intellectual,* turns to other academic disciplines for ideas, tools, concepts, and theories that can be used in the analysis of sociological theory (for example, R. Brown, 1987, 1990). Baker (1993) has looked at the implications of chaos theory, with its roots in physics, for sociological theory. Bailey has argued that while explicit attention to metatheorizing may be relatively new in sociology, "general systems theory has long been marked by widespread metatheorizing" (1994:27). Such metatheorizing was made necessary by the multidisciplinary character of systems theory and the need to study and bring together ideas from different fields. He later argues that social-systems theory "embraces metatheorizing" (Bailey, 1994:82). In fact, Bailey uses a metatheoretical approach to analyze developments in systems theory (see Chapter 9) and their relationship to developments in sociological theory.

The fourth subtype, the *external-social approach,* shifts to a more macro level to look at the larger society (national setting, sociocultural setting, etc.) and the nature of its impact on sociological theorizing (for example, Vidich and Lyman, 1985).

Of course, specific metatheoretical efforts can combine two or more types of M_U. For example, Jaworski has shown how Lewis Coser's 1956 book *The Functions of Social Conflict* (see Chapter 7) "was a deeply personal book and a historically situated statement" (1991:116). Thus, Jaworski touches on the impact of his family (internal-social) and of the rise of Hitler in Germany (external-social) on Coser's life and work. Jaworski also deals with the effect of external-intellectual (American radical political thought) and internal-intellectual (industrial sociology) factors on Coser's thinking. Thus, Jaworski combines all four subtypes of M_U in his analysis of Coser's work on social conflict.

2. Most metatheorizing in sociology is not M_U; rather, it is the second type, metatheorizing as a prelude to the development of sociological theory (M_P). Most important classical and contemporary theorists developed their theories, at least in part, on the basis of a careful study of, and reaction to, the work of other theorists. Among the most important examples are Marx's theory of capitalism (see Chapter 2), developed out of a systematic engagement with Hegelian philosophy as well as other ideas, such as political economy and utopian socialism; Parsons's action theory (see Chapter 7) developed out of a systematic study of the work of Durkheim, Weber, Pareto, and Marshall; Alexander's (1982–1983) multidimensional, neofunctional theory, based on a detailed study of the work of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons; and Habermas's (1987a) communication theory, based on his examination of the work of various critical theorists, as well as that of Marx, Weber, Parsons, Mead, and Durkheim. Let us look in more detail at M_P as it was practiced by Karl Marx.

In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,* Marx (1932/1964) develops his theoretical perspective on the basis of a detailed and careful analysis and critique of the works of political economists such as Adam Smith, Jean-Baptiste Say, David Ricardo, and James Mill; philosophers such as G.W.F. Hegel, the Young Hegelians (for example, Bruno Bauer), and Ludwig Feuerbach; utopian socialists such as Etienne Cabet, Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Pierre Proudhon; and a variety of other major and minor intellectual schools and figures. It seems safe to say that in almost its entirety the *Manuscripts of 1844* is a metatheoretical treatise in which Marx develops his own ideas out of an engagement with a variety of idea systems.

What of Marx's other works? Are they more empirical? Less metatheoretical? In his preface to *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels, 1845–1846/1970), C. J. Arthur describes that work as composed mainly of "detailed line by line polemics against the writings of some of their [Marx and Engels's] contemporaries" (1970:1). In fact, Marx himself describes *The German Ideology* as an effort "to set forth together our conception as opposed to the ideological one of German philosophy, in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience. The intention was carried out in the form of a critique of post-Hegelian philosophy" (1859/1970:22). *The Holy Family* (Marx and Engels, 1845/1956) is, above all, an extended critique of Bruno Bauer, the Young Hegelians, and their propensity toward speculative "critical criticism."[2] In their foreword, Marx and Engels make it clear that this kind of metatheoretical work is a prelude to their coming theorizing: "We therefore give this polemic as a preliminary to the independent works in which we . . . shall present our positive view" (1845/1956:16). In the *Grundrisse* Marx (1857–1858/1974) chooses as his metatheoretical antagonists the political economist David Ricardo and the French socialist Pierre Proudhon (Nicolaus, 1974). Throughout the *Grundrisse* Marx is struggling to solve an array of theoretical problems, in part through a critique of the theories and theorists mentioned here and in part through an application of ideas derived from Hegel. In describing the introduction to the *Grundrisse,* Nicolaus says that it "reflects in its every line the struggle of Marx against Hegel, Ricardo and Proudhon. From it, Marx carried off the most important objective of all, namely the basic principles of writing history dialectically" (1974:42). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx, 1859/1970) is, as the title suggests, an effort to build a distinctive economic approach on the basis of a critique of the works of the political economists.

Even *Capital* (1867/1967)—which is admittedly one of Marx's most empirical works, since in it he deals more directly with the reality of the capitalist work world through the use of government statistics and reports—is informed by Marx's earlier metatheoretical work and contains some metatheorizing of its own. In fact, the subtitle, *A Critique of Political Economy,* makes the metatheoretical roots absolutely clear. However, Marx is freer in *Capital* to be much more "positive," that is, to construct his own distinctive theoretical orientation. This freedom is traceable, in part, to his having done much of the metatheoretical groundwork in earlier works. Furthermore, most of the new metatheoretical work is relegated to the so-called fourth volume of *Capital,* published under the title *Theories of Surplus Value* (Marx, 1862–1863/1963, 1862–1863/1968). *Theories* is composed of many extracts from the work of the major political economists (for example, Smith and Ricardo) as well as critical analysis of them by Marx. In sum, it is safe to say that Marx was, largely, a metatheorist, perhaps the *most* metatheoretical of all classical sociological theorists.

3. There are a number of examples of the third type of metatheorizing, M_O—metatheorizing to produce overarching perspectives. They include Walter Wallace's (1988) "disciplinary matrix," Ritzer's (1979, 1981a) "integrated sociological paradigm" (discussed later in this Appendix), Furfey's (1953/1965) positivistic metasociology,

[2] In fact, the book is subtitled *Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*

Gross's (1961) "neodialectical" metasociology, Alexander's (1982) "general theoretical logic for sociology," and Alexander's (1995) later effort to develop a postpositivist approach to universalism and rationality. A number of theorists (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Emirbayer, 1997; Ritzer and Gindoff, 1992, 1994) have been engaged in an effort to create what Ritzer and Gindoff have called "methodological relationism"[3] to complement the extant overarching perspectives of "methodological individualism" (Udehn, 2002) and "methodological holism." Methodological relationism is derived from a study of works on micro-macro and agency-structure integration, as well as a variety of works in social psychology.

The three varieties of metatheory are ideal types. In actual cases there is often considerable overlap in the objectives of metatheoretical works. Nevertheless, those who do one type of metatheorizing tend to be less interested in achieving the objectives of the other two types. Of course, there are sociologists who at one time or another have done all three types of metatheorizing. For example, Alexander (1982–1983) creates overarching perspectives (M_O) in the first volume of *Theoretical Logic in Sociology,* uses them in the next three volumes to achieve a better understanding (M_U) of the classic theorists, and later seeks to help create neofunctionalism (M_P) as a theoretical successor to structural functionalism (Alexander and Colomy, 1990a).

Pierre Bourdieu's Reflexive Sociology

An important contemporary metatheorist (although he would resist that label, indeed any label) is Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu calls for a reflexive sociology: "For me, sociology ought to be meta but *always vis-à-vis itself.* It must use its own instruments to find out what it is and what it is doing, to try to know better where it stands" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:191; see also Meisenhelder, 1997). Or, using an older and less well defined label ("sociology of sociology") for metasociology, Bourdieu says, "The sociology of sociology is a fundamental dimension of sociological epistemology" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:68). Sociologists, who spend their careers "objectivizing" the social world, ought to spend some time objectivizing their own practices. Thus, sociology "continually turns back onto itself the scientific weapons it produces" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:214). Bourdieu even rejects certain kinds of metatheorizing (for example, the internal-social and internal-intellectual forms of M_U) as "a complacent and intimist return upon the private *person* of the sociologist or with a search for the intellectual *Zeitgeist* that animates his or her work" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:72; for a discussion of Bourdieu's more positive view of even these kinds of metatheorizing, see Wacquant, 1992:38). However, a rejection of certain kinds of metatheorizing does not represent a rejection of the undertaking in its entirety. Clearly, following the logic of *Homo Academicus,* (1984b), Bourdieu would favor examining the habitus and practices of sociologists within the fields of sociology as a discipline and the academic world, as well as the relationship between those fields and the fields of stratification and politics. His work *Distinction* (1984a) would

[3] Swartz (1997) does a particularly good job of delineating this metatheory as well as the other metatheories that inform Bourdieu's theorizing.

lead Bourdieu to concern himself with the strategies of individual sociologists, as well as of the discipline itself, to achieve distinction. For example, individual sociologists might use jargon to achieve high status in the field, and sociology might wrap itself in a cloak of science so that it could achieve distinction vis-à-vis the world of practice. In fact, Bourdieu has claimed that the scientific claims of sociology and other social sciences "are really euphemized assertions of power" (Robbins, 1991:139). Of course, this position has uncomfortable implications for Bourdieu's own work:

> Bourdieu's main problem during the 1980s has been to sustain his symbolic power whilst simultaneously undermining the scientificity on which it was originally founded. Some would say that he has tied the noose around his own neck and kicked away the stool from beneath his feet.
>
> (Robbins, 1991:150)

Given his commitment to theoretically informed empirical research, Bourdieu also would have little patience with most, if not all, forms of M_O, which he has described as "universal metadiscourse on knowledge of the world" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:159). More generally, Bourdieu would reject metatheorizing as an autonomous practice, setting metatheorizing apart from theorizing about and empirically studying the social world (see Wacquant, 1992:31).

Bourdieu makes an interesting case for metatheorizing when he argues that sociologists need to *"avoid being the toy of social forces in [their] practice of sociology"* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:183). The only way to avoid such a fate is to understand the nature of the forces acting on the sociologist at a given point in history. Such forces can be understood only via metatheoretical analysis, or what Bourdieu calls "socioanalysis" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:210). Once sociologists understand the nature of the forces (especially external-social and external-intellectual) operating on them, they will be in a better position to control the impact of those forces on their work. As Bourdieu puts it, in personal terms, "I continually use sociology to try to cleanse my work of . . . social determinants" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:211). Thus, the goal of metatheorizing from Bourdieu's point of view is not to undermine sociology, but to free it from those forces which determine it. Of course, what Bourdieu says of his own efforts is equally true of metatheoretical endeavors in general. While he strives to limit the effect of external factors on his work, Bourdieu is aware of the limitations of such efforts: "I do not for one minute believe or claim that I am fully liberated from them [social determinants]" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:211).

Similarly, Bourdieu wishes to free sociologists from the symbolic violence committed against them by other, more powerful sociologists. This objective invites internal-intellectual and internal-social analyses of sociology in order to uncover the sources and nature of that symbolic violence. Once the latter are understood, sociologists are in a better position to free themselves of, or at least limit, their effects. More generally, sociologists are well positioned to practice "epistemological vigilance" in order to protect themselves from these distorting pressures (Bourdieu, 1984b:15).

What is most distinctive about Bourdieu's metatheoretical approach is his refusal to separate metatheorizing from the other facets of sociology.[4] That is, he believes that sociologists should be continuously reflexive as they are doing their sociological analyses. They should reflect on what they are doing, and especially on how it might be distorting what they are examining, during their analyses. This reflection would limit the amount of "symbolic violence" against the subjects of study.

Although Bourdieu is doing a distinctive kind of metatheoretical work, it is clear that his work is, at least in part, metatheoretical. Given his growing significance in social theory, the association of Bourdieu's work with metatheorizing is likely to contribute further to the growth of interest in metatheorizing in sociology.

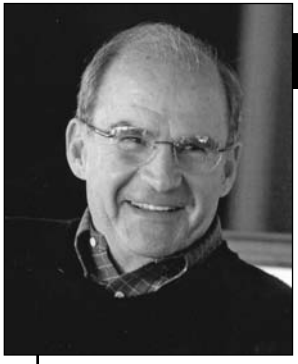
With this overview, we now turn to the specific metatheoretical approach that undergirds this book. As will become clear, it involves a combination of M_U and M_O. We begin with a brief review of the work of Thomas Kuhn, and then we examine Ritzer's (M_U) analysis of sociology's multiple paradigms. Finally, we review the metatheoretical tool—the integrated sociological paradigm (M_O)—that is the source of the levels of analysis used to analyze sociological theories throughout this book.

The Ideas of Thomas Kuhn

In 1962 the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn published a rather slim volume entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Hoyningen-Huene, 1993). Because this work grew out of philosophy, it appeared to be fated to a marginal status within sociology, especially because it focused on the hard sciences (physics, for example) and had little directly to say about the social sciences. However, the theses of the book proved extremely interesting to people in a wide range of fields (for example, Hollinger, 1980, in history; Searle, 1972, in linguistics; Stanfield, 1974, in economics), and to none was it more important than to sociologists. In 1970 Robert Friedrichs published the first important work from a Kuhnian perspective, *A Sociology of Sociology.* After that there was a steady stream of work from this perspective (Eckberg and Hill, 1979; Effrat, 1972; Eisenstadt and Curelaru, 1976; Falk and Zhao, 1990a, 1990b; Friedrichs, 1972; Greisman, 1986; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lodahl and Gordon, 1972; D. Phillips, 1973, 1975; Quadagno, 1979; Ritzer, 1975a, 1975b, 1981b; M. Rosenberg, 1989; Snizek, 1976; Snizek, Fuhrman, and Miller, 1979). There is little doubt that Kuhnian theory is an important variety of M_U, but what exactly is Kuhn's approach?

One of Kuhn's goals in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) was to challenge commonly held assumptions about the way in which science changes. In the view of most laypeople and many scientists, science advances in a cumulative manner, with each advance building inexorably on all that preceded it. Science has achieved its present state through slow and steady increments of knowledge. It will advance to even greater heights in the future. This conception of science was enunciated

[4] This leads Swartz (1997:11) to argue that "Bourdieu does not share Ritzer's (1988) vision of establishing sociological metatheory as a legitimate subfield within the discipline of sociology."



GEORGE RITZER

Autobiography as a Metatheoretical Tool

Biographical and autobiographical work is useful in helping us understand the work of sociological theorists, and of sociologists generally. The historian of science, Thomas Hankin, explains it this way:

> [A] fully integrated biography of a scientist which includes not only his personality, but also his scientific work and the intellectual and social context of his times, [is] . . . still the best way to get at many of the problems that beset the writing of history of science . . . science is created by individuals, and however much it may be driven by forces outside, these forces work through the scientist himself. Biography is the literary lens through which we can best view this process.
>
> (Hankin, 1979:14)

What Hankin asserts about scientists generally informs my orientation to the biographies of sociological theorists, including myself. This autobiographical snippet is designed to suggest at least a few ways in which biography can be a useful tool for metatheoretical analysis.

Although I have taught in sociology departments for more than thirty years, have written extensively about sociology, and have lectured all over the world on the topic, none of my degrees are in sociology. This lack of a formal background in the field has led to a lifelong study of sociology in general and sociological theory in particular. It has also, at least in one sense, aided my attempt to understand sociological theory. Because I had not been trained in a particular "school," I came to sociological theory with few prior conceptions and biases. Rather, I was a student of all "schools of thought"; they were all equally grist for my theoretical mill.

My first metatheoretical work, *Sociology: A Multiple Paradigm Science* (1975a), sought not only to lay out sociology's separable, and often conflicting, paradigms but also to make the case for paradigm linking, leaping, bridging, and integrating. Uncomfortable with paradigmatic conflict, I wanted to see more harmony and integration in sociology. That desire led to the publication of *Toward an Integrated Sociological Paradigm* (1981a), in which I more fully developed my sense of an integrated paradigm. The interest in resolving theoretical conflict led to a focus on micro-macro (1990a) and agency-structure (Ritzer and Gindoff, 1994) integration as well as the larger issue of theoretical syntheses (1990b).

by the physicist Sir Isaac Newton, who said, "If I have seen further, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants." But Kuhn regarded this conception of cumulative scientific development as a myth and sought to debunk it.

My interest in metatheoretical work is explained by my desire to understand theory better and to resolve unnecessary conflict within sociological theory. In *Metatheorizing in Sociology* (1991b) and in an edited volume, *Metatheorizing* (1992a), I made a case for the need for the systematic study of sociological theory. I believe that we need to do more of this in order to understand theory better, produce new theory, and produce new overarching theoretical perspectives (or metatheories). Metatheoretical study is also oriented to clarifying contentious issues, resolving disputes, and allowing for greater integration and synthesis.

Having spent many years seeking to clarify the nature of sociological theory, in the early 1990s I grew weary of the abstractions of metatheoretical work. I sought to apply the various theories that I had learned to very concrete aspects of the social world. I had done a little with this in the 1980s, applying Weber's theory of rationalization to fast-food restaurants (1983) and the medical profession (Ritzer and Walczak, 1988). I revisited the 1983 essay, and the result was a book, *The McDonaldization of Society* (1993, 1996, 2000, 2008b), which argued that while in Weber's day the model of the rationalization process was the bureaucracy, today the fast-food restaurant has become a better model of that process (additional essays on this topic are to be found in *The McDonaldization Thesis* [1998]). In *Expressing America: A Critique of the Global Credit Card Society* (1995), I turned my attention to another everyday economic phenomenon, which I analyzed not only from the perspective of rationalization theory, but from other perspectives, including Georg Simmel's theoretical ideas on money.

This work on fast-food restaurants and credit cards led to the realization that what I was really interested in was the sociology of consumption, a field little developed in the United States, at least in comparison to Great Britain and other European nations. That led to *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption* (1999, 2005a), in which I used Weberian, Marxian, and postmodern theory to analyze the revolutionary impact of a range of new means of consumption (superstores, megamalls, cybermalls, home shopping television, casinos, theme parks, and cruise ships, as well as fast-food restaurants and other franchises) on the way Americans and the rest of the world consume goods and services.

The global reach of McDonald's and McDonaldization, credit cards, and the new means of consumption has led me more directly to an interest in globalization and my latest book, *The Globalization of Nothing* (2004). While I cannot rule out a return to metatheoretical issues, and in fact have recently dealt with them (Ritzer, 2001), my current plans are to continue to use theory to think about the contemporary world, especially consumption and globalization.

Source: Adapted (and updated) from George Ritzer, "I Never Metatheory I Didn't Like," *Mid-American Review of Sociology,* 15:21–32, 1991. See also Goodman (2005).

Kuhn acknowledged that accumulation plays some role in the advance of science, but the truly major changes come about as a result of revolutions. Kuhn offered a theory of how major changes in science occur. He saw a science at any given time

as being dominated by a specific *paradigm* (defined for the moment as a fundamental image of the science's subject matter) (Ritzer, 2005b). *Normal science* is a period of accumulation of knowledge in which scientists work to expand the reigning paradigm. Such scientific work inevitably spawns *anomalies,* or findings that cannot be explained by the reigning paradigm. A *crisis* stage occurs if these anomalies mount, and this crisis ultimately may end in a scientific revolution. The reigning paradigm is overthrown as a new one takes its place at the center of the science. A new dominant paradigm is born, and the stage is set for the cycle to repeat itself. Kuhn's theory can be depicted diagrammatically:

$$\text{Paradigm I} \rightarrow \text{Normal Science} \rightarrow \text{Anomalies} \rightarrow \text{Crisis} \rightarrow \text{Revolution} \rightarrow \text{Paradigm II}$$

It is during periods of revolution that the truly great changes in science take place. This view places Kuhn clearly at odds with most conceptions of scientific development.

The key concept in Kuhn's approach, as well as in this section, is the paradigm. Unfortunately, Kuhn is vague on what he means by a paradigm (Alcala-Campos, 1997). According to Margaret Masterman (1970), he used the term in at least twenty-one different ways. I will employ a definition of *paradigm* that I feel is true to the sense and spirit of Kuhn's early work.

A paradigm serves to differentiate one scientific community from another. It can be used to differentiate physics from chemistry or sociology from psychology. These fields have different paradigms. It also can be used to differentiate between different historical stages in the development of a science (Mann, Grimes, and Kemp, 1997). The paradigm that dominated physics in the nineteenth century is different from the one that dominated it in the early twentieth century. There is a third usage of the paradigm concept, and it is the one that is most useful here. Paradigms can differentiate among cognitive groupings *within* the same science. Contemporary psychoanalysis, for example, is differentiated into Freudian, Jungian, and Horneyian paradigms (among others)—that is, there are *multiple paradigms* in psychoanalysis—and the same is true of sociology and most other fields.

I can now offer a definition of *paradigm* that I feel is true to the sense of Kuhn's original work:

> A paradigm is a fundamental image of the subject matter within a science. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, how they should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answers obtained. The paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community (*or subcommunity*) from another. It subsumes, defines, and interrelates the exemplars, *theories* [italics added], and methods and instruments that exist within it.
>
> (Ritzer, 1975a:7)

With this definition we can begin to see the relationship between paradigms and theories. *Theories are only part of larger paradigms.* To put it another way, a paradigm may encompass two or more *theories,* as well as different *images* of the subject matter, *methods* (and instruments), and *exemplars* (specific pieces of scientific work that stand as a model for all those who follow).

Sociology: A Multiple-Paradigm Science

Ritzer's (1975a, 1975b, 1980) work on the paradigmatic status of sociology, beginning in the mid-1970s, provides the basis for the metatheoretical perspective that has guided the analysis of sociological theory throughout this book. There are *three* paradigms that dominated sociology, with several others having had the potential to achieve paradigmatic status. The three paradigms are labeled the *social-facts, social-definition,* and *social-behavior* paradigms. Each paradigm is analyzed in terms of the four components of a paradigm.

The Social-Facts Paradigm

1. *Exemplar:* The model for social factists is the work of Emile Durkheim, particularly *The Rules of Sociological Method* and *Suicide*.

2. *Image of the subject matter:* Social factists focus on what Durkheim termed social facts, or large-scale social structures and institutions. Those who subscribe to the social-facts paradigm focus not only on these phenomena but on their effect on individual thought and action.

3. *Methods:* Social factists are more likely than are those who subscribe to the other paradigms to use the interview-questionnaire[5] and historical-comparative methods.

4. *Theories:* The social-facts paradigm encompasses a number of theoretical perspectives. *Structural-functional* theorists tend to see social facts as neatly interrelated and order as maintained by general consensus. *Conflict* theorists tend to emphasize disorder among social facts as well as the notion that order is maintained by coercive forces in society. Although structural functionalism and conflict theory are the dominant theories in this paradigm, there are others, including *systems* theory.

The Social-Definition Paradigm

1. *Exemplar:* To social definitionists, the unifying model is Max Weber's work on social action.

2. *Image of the subject matter:* Weber's work helped lead to an interest among social definitionists in the way actors define their social situations and the effect of these definitions on ensuing action and interaction.

3. *Methods:* Social definitionists, although they are most likely to use the interview-questionnaire method, are more likely to use the observation method than are those in any other paradigm (Prus, 1996). In other words, observation is the distinctive methodology of social definitionists.

4. *Theories:* There are a wide number of theories that can be included within social definitionism: a*ction theory, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology,* and *existentialism.*

[5] William Snizek (1976) has shown that the interview-questionnaire is dominant in *all* paradigms.

The Social-Behavior Paradigm

1. *Exemplar:* The model for social behaviorists is the work of the psychologist B. F. Skinner.

2. *Image of the subject matter:* The subject matter of sociology to social behaviorists is the unthinking *behavior* of individuals. Of particular interest are the rewards that elicit desirable behaviors and the punishments that inhibit undesirable behaviors.

3. *Methods:* The distinctive method of social behaviorism is the experiment.

4. *Theories:* Two theoretical approaches in sociology can be included under the heading "social behaviorism." The first is *behavioral sociology,* which is very close to pure psychological behaviorism. The second, which is much more important, is *exchange theory.*[6]

Toward a More Integrated Sociological Paradigm

In addition to detailing the nature of sociology's multiple paradigms, I sought to make the case for more paradigmatic integration in sociology. Although there is reason for extant paradigms to continue to exist, there is also a need for a more integrated paradigm.[7] Contrary to a claim by Nash and Wardell (1993), I am *not* arguing for a new hegemonic position in sociology; I am *not* arguing that "the current diversity represents an undesirable condition needing elimination" (Nash and Wardell, 1993:278). On the contrary, I argue for *more* diversity through the development of an integrated paradigm to supplement extant paradigms. Like Nash and Wardell, I *favor* theoretical diversity.

Extant paradigms tend to be one-sided, focusing on specific levels of social analysis while paying little or no attention to the others. This characteristic is reflected in the social factists' concern with macro structures; the social definitionists' concern with action, interaction, and the social construction of reality; and the social behaviorists' concern with behavior. It is this kind of one-sidedness that has led to a growing interest in a more integrated approach among a wide range of sociologists (Ritzer, 1991d). (This is only part of a growing interest in integration within and even among many social sciences; see especially Mitroff and Kilmann, 1978.) For example, Robert Merton, representing social factism, saw it and social definitionism as mutually enriching, as "opposed to one another in about the same sense as ham is opposed to eggs: they are perceptively different but mutually enriching" (1975:30).

The key to an integrated paradigm is the notion of *levels* of social analysis (Ritzer, 1979, 1981a). As the reader is well aware, *the social world is not really divided into levels.* In fact, social reality is best viewed as an enormous variety of

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[6] Analyses of this paradigm schema include Eckberg and Hill (1979); Friedheim (1979); Harper, Sylvester, and Walczak (1980); Snizek (1976); and Staats (1976).

[7] There are other possibilities, including a postmodern paradigm (Milovanovic, 1995) and more interparadigmatic dialogue (Chriss, 1996).

social phenomena that are involved in continuing interaction and change. Individuals, groups, families, bureaucracies, the polity, and numerous other highly diverse social phenomena represent the bewildering array of phenomena that make up the social world. It is extremely difficult to get a handle on such a large number of wide-ranging and mutually interpenetrating social phenomena. Some sort of conceptual schema is clearly needed, and sociologists have developed a number of such schemas in an effort to deal with the social world. The idea of levels of social analysis employed here should be seen as but one of a large number of such schemas that can be, and have been, used for dealing with the complexities of the social world.

Levels of Social Analysis: An Overview

Although the idea of levels is implicit in much of sociology, it has received relatively little explicit attention. (However, there does seem to be some explicit interest in this issue, as reflected, for example, in the work of Hage [1994], Whitmeyer [1994], and especially Prendergast [2005c], Jaffee [1998], and Smelser [1997].) In concentrating on levels here, I am making explicit what has been implicit in sociology.

Two continua of social reality are useful in developing the major levels of the social world. The first is the *microscopic-macroscopic* continuum. Thinking of the social world as being made up of a series of entities ranging from those large in scale to those small in scale is relatively easy, because it is so familiar. Most people in their day-to-day lives conceive of the social world in these terms. As we saw in Chapter 14, a number of thinkers have worked with a micro-macro continuum. For laypeople and academics alike, the continuum is based on the simple idea that social phenomena vary greatly in size. At the macro end of the continuum are such large-scale social phenomena as groups of societies (for example, the capitalist world-system), societies, and cultures. At the micro end are individual actors and their thoughts and actions. In between are a wide range of meso-level phenomena—groups, collectivities, social classes, and organizations. We have little difficulty recognizing these distinctions and thinking of the world in micro-macro terms. There are no clear dividing lines between the micro social units and the macro units. Instead, there is a continuum ranging from the micro to the macro ends.

The second continuum is the *objective-subjective* dimension of social analysis. At each end of the micro-macro continuum (and everywhere in between) we can differentiate between objective and subjective components. At the micro, or individual, level, there are the subjective mental processes of an actor and the objective patterns of action and interaction in which he or she engages. *Subjective* here refers to something that occurs solely in the realm of ideas; *objective* relates to real, material events. This same differentiation is found at the macro end of the continuum. A society is made up of objective structures, such as governments, bureaucracies, and laws, and subjective phenomena, such as norms and values.

The social world is very complicated, and to get a handle on it, we need relatively simple models. The simple model we are seeking is formed out of the intersection of the two continua of levels of social reality. The first, the microscopic-macroscopic continuum, can be depicted as in Figure A.1.

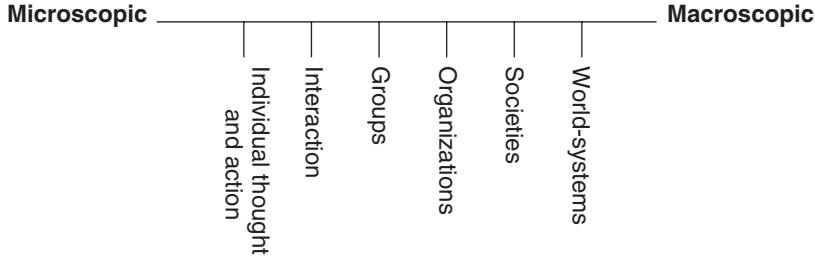

FIGURE A.1 The Microscopic-Macroscopic Continuum, with Identification of Some Key Points on the Continuum

The objective-subjective continuum presents greater problems, yet it is no less important than the micro-macro continuum. In general, an objective social phenomenon has a real, material existence. We can think of the following, among others, as objective social phenomena: actors, action, interaction, bureaucratic structures, law, and the state apparatus. It is possible to see, touch, or chart all these objective phenomena. However, there are social phenomena that exist *solely* in the realm of ideas; they have no material existence. These are sociological phenomena such as mental processes, the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), norms, values, and many elements of culture. The problem with the objective-subjective continuum is that there are many phenomena in the middle that have *both* objective and subjective elements. The family, for example, has a real material existence as well as a series of subjective mutual understandings, norms, and values. Similarly, the polity is composed of objective laws and bureaucratic structures as well as subjective political norms and values. In fact, it is probably true that the vast majority of social phenomena are mixed types that represent some combination of objective and subjective elements. Thus, it is best to think of the objective-subjective continuum as two polar types with a series of variously mixed types in the middle. Figure A.2 shows the objective-subjective continuum.

Although these continua are interesting in themselves, the interrelationship of the two continua is what concerns us here. Figure 14.1 (see Chapter 14) is a schematic

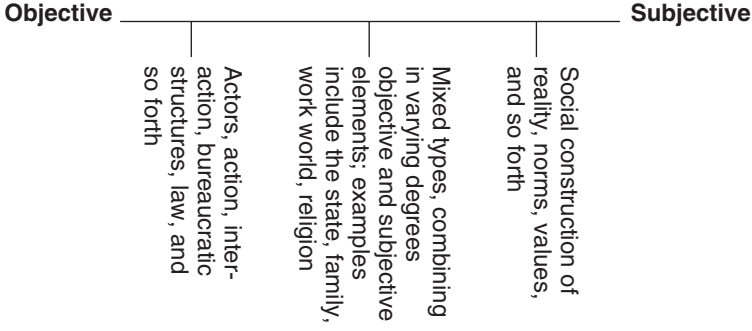

FIGURE A.2 The Objective-Subjective Continuum, with Identification of Some Mixed Types

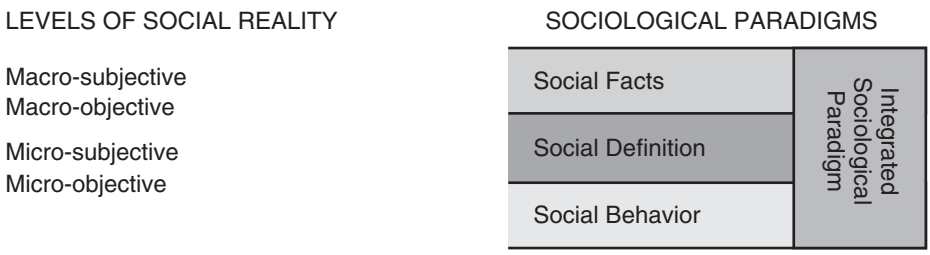

FIGURE A.3 Levels of Social Analysis and the Major Sociological Paradigms

representation of the intersection of these two continua and the four major levels of social analysis derived from it.

The contention here is that an integrated sociological paradigm must deal with the four basic levels of social analysis identified in Figure A.3 and their interrelationships (for similar models, see Alexander, 1985a; Wiley, 1988). It must deal with macro-objective entities such as bureaucracy, macro-subjective realities such as values, micro-objective phenomena such as patterns of interaction, and micro-subjective facts such as the process of reality construction. We must remember that in the real world, all these gradually blend into the others as part of the larger social continuum, but we have made some artificial and rather arbitrary differentiations in order to be able to deal with social reality. These four levels of social analysis are posited for heuristic purposes and are not meant to be accurate depictions of the social world.

Although there is much to be gained from the development of an integrated sociological paradigm, one can expect resistance from many quarters. Reba Lewis has argued that opposition to an integrated paradigm comes from those theorists, "paradigm warriors" (Aldrich, 1988), who are intent on defending their theoretical turf come what may:

> Much of the objection to an integrated paradigm is not on theoretical, but on political grounds; an integrated paradigm threatens the purity and independence—and perhaps even the existence—of theoretical approaches which derive their inspiration from *opposition* to existing theory. . . . An integrated paradigm, such as Ritzer proposes, allows and even encourages a broader perspective than some find comfortable. Adopting an integrated paradigm means relinquishing belief in the ultimate truth of one's favorite theory. . . . Acceptance of an integrated paradigm requires an understanding, and indeed an appreciation, of a broad range of theoretical perspectives—an intellectually challenging task. . . . Although Ritzer does not discuss the issue, this author maintains that overcoming massive *intellectual agoraphobia* presents the greatest challenge to acceptance of an integrated paradigm.
>
> (R. Lewis, 1991:228–229)

An obvious question is how the four levels of the integrated paradigm relate to the three paradigms discussed earlier, as well as to the integrated paradigm. Figure A.3 relates the four levels to the three paradigms.

The social-facts paradigm focuses primarily on the macro-objective and macro-subjective levels. The social-definition paradigm is concerned largely with the

micro-subjective world and that part of the micro-objective world that depends on mental processes (action). The social-behavior paradigm deals with that part of the micro-objective world that does not involve the minding process (behavior). Whereas the three extant paradigms cut across the levels of social reality horizontally, an integrated paradigm cuts across vertically. This depiction makes it clear why the integrated paradigm does not supersede the others. Although each of the three existing paradigms deals with a given level or levels in great detail, the integrated paradigm deals with all levels but does not examine any given level in anything like the degree of intensity of the other paradigms. Thus the choice of a paradigm depends on the kind of question being asked. Not all sociological issues require an integrated approach, but at least some do.

What has been outlined in the preceding pages is a model for the image of the subject matter of an integrated sociological paradigm. This sketch needs to be detailed more sharply, but that is a task for another time (see Ritzer, 1981a). The goal of this discussion is not the development of a new sociological paradigm but the delineation of an overarching metatheoretical schema (M_O) that allows us to analyze sociological theory in a coherent fashion. The model developed in Figure 14.1 forms the basis for this book.

Sociological theory is analyzed by using the four levels of social analysis depicted in Figure 14.1. This figure provides us with a metatheoretical tool that can be used in the comparative analysis of sociological theories. It enables us to analyze the concerns of a theory and how they relate to the concerns of all other sociological theories.

To be avoided at all costs is the simple identification of a theory or a theorist with specific levels of social analysis. Although it is true, given the preceding description of the current paradigmatic status of sociology, that sociological theorists who adhere to a given paradigm tend to focus on a given level or levels of social analysis, it often does them an injustice simply to equate the breadth of their work with one or more levels. For example, Karl Marx often is thought of as focusing on macro-objective structures—in particular, on the economic structures of capitalism. But the use of the schema in which there are multiple levels of social analysis allows us to see that Marx had rich insights regarding *all* levels of social reality and their interrelationships. Similarly, symbolic interactionism generally is considered a perspective that deals with micro subjectivity and micro objectivity, but it is not devoid of insights into the macroscopic levels of social analysis (Maines, 1977).

It is also important to remember that the use of levels of social analysis to analyze a theory tends to break up the wholeness, the integrity, and the internal consistency of that theory. Although the levels are useful for understanding a theory and comparing it to others, one must take pains to deal with the interrelationship among levels and with the totality of a theory.

In sum, the metatheoretical schema outlined in Figure 14.1, the development of which was traced in this Appendix, provides the basis for the analysis of the sociological theories discussed in this book.