

# THE CONCEPTS OF SOCIOLOGY

*A Treatise*

*Presenting a Suggested Organization of Sociological Theory  
in Terms of Its Major Concepts*

BY

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1931  
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TO THE MEMORY OF  
ALBION WOODBURY SMALL  
SCHOLAR • TEACHER • FRIEND  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

## INTRODUCTION

THIS is an important volume. The author has made the most complete presentation of the nature and significance of concepts which has yet appeared in sociological literature. In view of the fact that the conceptual approach is having an increasing place in present-day analysis, such a discussion should prove of great value. The volume reveals as no previous work has done the confusion in the use of concepts which exists in sociological thought at the present time, with the resulting difficulties. It is the culmination of years of work by the Head of the Department of Sociology of the University of Cincinnati.

The general principles of sociology are here organized upon a framework of its major categories, mapping out the grand divisions of sociological theory according to present usage and agreement. These fall under the headings of: I. Societary Composition; II. Societary Causation; III. Societary Change; and IV. Societary Products. While there may be differences of opinion with respect to details of his division of societary phenomena, the author has set forth one logical and consistent arrangement.

Since the leading contributions to theory are necessarily examined, the book is also an admirable survey of sociological thought and could well be used as a textbook in sociological theory.

It also includes the most comprehensive and usable bibliography of sociological theory that has yet been made. This includes references to all the major concepts wherever they appear in sociological literature. The thorough student of sociology will regard this volume as one of the indispensable tools of his trade.

JEROME DAVIS

YALE UNIVERSITY

## PREFACE

AN approach to any field of study by means of its concepts may be made in two ways. The first is an easy and superficial substitute for scientific investigation. One may, after the manner in which he works on a cross-word puzzle, search his dictionary to find the particular word that "fits," letting the labeling of phenomena take the place of inquiry into their essential nature. Undertaken in this fashion, such a study becomes a mere eclectic exercise, a formal pigeonholing, a comfortable armchair sorting-over of the thinking of other men which takes the place of the more arduous labor of digging into the roots of reality for oneself. The second way is to employ the conceptual approach as a method of logic *per se*, an especially adapted form of analysis whereby to discriminate and select, and eventually to correlate a body of data into a coherent, congruous, and systematic structure.

Needless to say, the volume here presented aspires to the second of these. The problem to which it is primarily addressed is that of organizing the general theory of Sociology in terms of its major concepts. This involves, first of all, the discovery of what those major concepts are, and next, the definition of their relation to each other and their arrangement in such a way that taken together they are, without too much overlapping, inclusive of the territory. This being done, it calls for using these main centers as foci of attention and co-ordination, and the building up of the several parts into a consistent and unified whole in relation to them as centers.

The task has been threefold, one Part being given to each. *Part I* is devoted to three objectives. The first is to point out anew the fact that human understanding and achievement are dependent upon, and in proportion to, the adequacy of intercommunication. (Chapter I.) The second is to indicate the importance of concepts as aids to communication, and their indispensability as instruments of scientific inquiry. (Chapter III.) The third is to reveal the confusion existing in the conceptology of Sociology, and to make clear the need for developing more fully than has been done so far the conceptual approach to the field. (Chapter IV.)

In accordance with these objectives *Part II*, which is the core of the volume, undertakes to carry out what is stated above as the central purpose: *viz.*, the presentation of the main outlines of sociological theory

in terms of its basic concepts. In so doing it seeks to resolve to some extent the confusion in existing thought and terminology by indicating the major categories to which our technical ideations are related. The suggested classification of the major concepts of Sociology outlined in Chapter V lays down the ground plan, of which the remaining chapters are the expansion.

Finally, *Part III* undertakes to classify the literature of Sociology on the basis of the concepts with which it has dealt. This not only provides a detailed bibliography to facilitate further study, but it also provides a classified exhibit which shows at a glance what relative proportions of attention the several divisions of the subject have received. This in itself is intended to constitute a rough analysis of the main points of interest and emphasis that have been developed up to the present time.

Each chapter of *Part II* has been organized under three heads. The first outlines and defines the scope and content of its particular category. The second records leading contributions to that topic which have been made in the past; for common sense no less than scientific procedure itself suggests that one who seeks understanding of any territory is wise to examine first the reports and findings of previous explorers of the region. The third section of the chapter offers a suggested organization of theory under the given head, clustered with reference to what are regarded as its most significant related concepts.

Let it be emphatically stated in this connection that such a study as this is in no sense a substitute for detailed and intensive researches into specific areas of social phenomena. Excellent beginnings have been made along this line, and every encouragement should be given to whatever study of the raw materials is undertaken that will lead us to new insights. Only by such inquiries into the actual phenomena themselves can existing concepts be authoritatively tested, or new ones disclosed. Such studies must proceed apace; and if in their ruthless course the theories and interpretations which are crystallized in our present concepts are shattered, more power to them! A responsibility of modern research in every field is to make the work of the past archaic as soon as it is possible to improve upon it!

It should be perceived, however, that the specific researches referred to in no sense fulfill the task undertaken by this volume. First-hand search into concrete data is essential; otherwise materials will be lacking for further scientific advance. But the findings, and the interpretations based upon them, must be reduced to a coherent body of conceptual reference if they are to achieve full value. Neither one is, nor by nature can be made to be, a substitute for the other. They are complementary,

not oppositional, phases of our division of labor in the interpretation of reality, each requiring the other in order to come to full fruition.

The preparation of such a work as this has necessarily laid me under enduring obligation to many people, to whom my deep appreciation is extended. In the pages of the text itself I have endeavored to make acknowledgment of specific contributions.

The list of those to whom especial appreciation is due must be headed by the name of Dr. Albion W. Small. From him I first learned that there are such things as concepts, and it was through my study with him that I came to appreciate the vital significance to Sociology of the conceptual approach (which he designated as "methodology"). It was his encouragement and kindly insistence that led me to undertake the present task. During the last two years of his life he was my frequent counsellor and painstaking critic in the actual work, giving of himself with a self-forgetful generosity which this acknowledgment can do little to repay. The general plan of arrangement of basic categories which is followed was worked out in conference with him. Those familiar with his thought will recognize his imprint on many pages where his name does not appear. On the desk before me lies the following letter, written in his own flowing script a scant fortnight before his death:

DEAR DR. EUBANK:

The longer I have thought about your book, the more I have been impressed by its peculiar timeliness. The sociological movement was essentially a protest against the ideas which dominated the social sciences that the human lot is some sort of glacial gravitation of particles without other connection than aggregation in masses. The sociologists pinned their faith to an insight that in some way or other human destinies are intimately interrelated with one another. This was the secret of their attempt to find the secret of life by following out analogies between "the social organism" and the animal organism. That proved to be a false clue, but it led to the psychological nexus which we are trying to interpret. Meanwhile the sociologists are specializing so minutely upon particular types of human groupings that they are in danger of losing sight of human society as a whole. Your book will be a much needed corrective of this tendency. It will bring into view cardinal principles of action which bind all social relations into interdependence upon one another. I cannot think of a more timely contribution to social science in general.

Sincerely,

CHICAGO, MARCH 6, 1926.

ALBION W. SMALL

For assistance in special ways I wish to express my gratitude to the following:

To the Departments of Sociology of the University of Chicago and of the University of Southern California, for the generous way in which

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To my colleagues of the faculty of the University of Cincinnati, for reading and advising upon certain portions of the manuscript: Dr. C. M. Lotspeich, the sections on language; Drs. H. S. Fry and S. J. M. Allen, the sections dealing with chemistry and physics; and Dr. Shiro Tashiro, the sections dealing with biology. Dr. Abraham Cronbach of Hebrew Union College has rendered similar service on parts dealing with social philosophy.

To Drs. James A. Quinn and William Oscar Brown, my associates in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati, I am indebted for counsel, suggestion, and practical contributions which have been invaluable throughout the work.

During the nearly seven years in which the study has been in progress, its evolving materials have been submitted successively to my graduate seminars in sociological theory at the University of Cincinnati. Their penetrating analyses and friendly challenges at every point have played no small part in determination of the final form; particularly those of Eugenia Remelin Whitridge, Joseph Sagmaster, Paul Douglass, Gertrude Brown, and Morris Lieberman.

Appreciative acknowledgment is hereby made to those who have assisted in preparing these pages for the press: Lilian Eubank Morgan, Lois Elliott, Dorothy Lauterbach, Elizabeth Hughes, Nellie Rechenbach, Josephine Streit, Mary Drucker, and Mildred Lambert; and to Laile, Lauriel, and Lois, daughters three, and fellow-workers.

Nothing I can say will do justice to the contribution which has been made to this volume by my wife, Jessie Burrall Eubank. Not only has the laboriousness of the undertaking been immeasurably lightened by her unwavering faith in the nature of the task; she has also given of brain and hand to every chapter, as sagacious counsellor, discriminating critic, and indefatigable co-laborer. Because of what she has done the completed work is in a real sense hers as well as mine.

EARLE EDWARD EUBANK

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# Part I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

THE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH AND ITS MEANING  
FOR SOCIOLOGY



# CHAPTER I

## LANGUAGE IN GENERAL

### I

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE

##### EXPRESSIVE MOVEMENTS

1. Emotional Movements
2. Indicative Movements
3. Descriptive Movements

##### EXPRESSIVE SOUNDS

1. Unreflective Sound Rendering
2. Onomatopoetic Sounds
3. Sounds of Understood Meaning

##### METHODS OF EXPANDING EXISTING LANGUAGE

1. By Invention
2. By Borrowing
3. By Modification

##### THE STARTING POINT OF TRUE LANGUAGE

### II

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE IN HUMAN ASSOCIATION

1. Creation of Thought
2. Exchange of Thought
3. Preservation of Thought

### I

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE

Man is chiefly differentiated from the lower animals by the nature of his mental life and its products. Physically equipped with a superior brain, he attains levels of existence to which creatures of lower intelligence can never climb.

Not only does man excel sub-human creatures in his individual capacity for thought; he also excels in his ability to communicate with his fellows. As a result of this he has built up a collective life with his own kind which transcends that of any other species. The ability to exchange thought is the basic requirement for group life. Upon this