

Sociology 500 A

Midterm

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DeFegstem

Positivist notions of causality differ greatly from those of the realist framework. According to positivist thought, science is defined as the study of that which is directly observable (empiricism), and its purpose is to gain predictive and explanatory knowledge of the external world. Using theoretical statements and general laws, positivists attempt to predict events in nature by explaining them as instances of well supported regularities. These statements of regularity, as they are called, are only ~~(contingently)~~ ^{that I think they could be said better} according to Keat and Wray, they must be proven by experimentation and systematic observation, which are for positivists the only source of sure and empirical knowledge. The positivist uses two basic models to describe the idea of

regularity. In the first, called the Deductive-Nomological Model (D-N), scientific explanation is presented as a form of logical argument. According to Kistler and Uebel, the occurrence of an event in the D-N model follows logically from some given general laws and antecedent conditions. In the second model, the Inductive-Statistical model, the law statements of the D-N model are replaced by probabilistic or statistical generalizations. In this model, the relationship between premises and conclusion is one of inductive probability, instead of deductive ~~and~~ necessity.

We see that in the positivist framework the search for and use of generalizable laws plays an important, even crucial role in science. However, despite their attempts

to come up with general, universal laws, and useful theories, positivists have tended to ignore and reject the notion of causal necessity, and have instead focused on the Humean idea of 'regularity'. According to David Hume, causation involves both the idea of the cause immediately preceding its effect, and also some idea of a necessary connection between the two. Hume argued that causal necessity was not logical necessity because "it is impossible to deduce, from a statement asserting the occurrence of one event, the statement asserting the later occurrence of another event, which may be regarded as the effect of the first one. Hume further argued that it was impossible to observe directly an underlying necessity

between two events. "However closely and systematically we observe any two events, that we believe to be cause and effect, we can never discover any necessary link or connection between them." However, Hume argued that through observation one can denote a regularity of occurrence. "To say that one event is the cause of another is to say that the first is temporally prior to the second, and that whenever an event of the same type ^{as the first} occurs, it is always followed by one of the same type as the second.

The positivist recognizes 2 types of causality:

Thus, in the positivist view, laws are Humean regularities, not logically necessary statements. Logical implies that what one has is a deduction that has no privileged ontological status. It is but purely universal conditional statements. They only a logical connection. Regularity implies what Hume says. Neither implies a strong sense of causal link because they are not observable. } & indeed, from this point of view, they don't exist.

Turning to the terminology used by positivists, there exist mainly two types of terms, theoretical and observational. Observational terms, for the positivist, refer to what can be observed and whose meaning can be defined, while theoretical

These follow from the positivist notion of causality !!!

terms are not observable, but are useful fictions created to explain phenomena. As

Keat and Urry point out, because the objective of positivist science is the explanation and prediction of observable phenomena, the use of theoretical terms is highly problematic. This is so because they are not observable.

However, through the use of correspondence ^{rules} laws, positivists have attempted to remedy this problem. The purpose of correspondence rules is to give definitions to theoretical terms by means of statements containing only observational

terms. By linking the two sets of terms via correspondence rules, ~~so~~ according to Keat and Urey, the epistemologically inferior status of theoretical statements would be remedied, their apparent commitment to unobservable ontologies avoided, and their lack of scientificity made good. However, as they further point out, the use of such rules has not proven entirely successful and remains rather problematic.

Turning to the realist version of science, one finds that many of the basic tenets of positivism apply in this framework also. Like positivists, realists argue that science should be an empirically based, rational and objective enterprise, the purpose of which is to gain explanatory and predictive knowledge of nature. However, the crucial difference

between positivism and realism has to do with causality. Realists reject the Humean view of regularity and concentrate instead ~~of~~ on the often unobservable structures and mechanisms which causally generate observable phenomena.

Instead of relying heavily on the ability to predict the occurrence of a particular phenomena, realists search for mechanisms that explain why one event follows another and how the underlying mechanisms that exist operate to cause such phenomena. Thus, the search for the 'essence' of some given objects, and how these essences relate to give one causal power over the other are what must be studied, according to the realist position.

good

Turning to the use of observational and theoretical terms, realists argue that 'scientific

theories enable us to give causal explanations of observable phenomena by their description of structures and mechanisms that are typically beyond observation. ^{Why quotes?} Hence, although the realist may accept that the truth or falsity of observational statements is a matter of far greater certainty than that of theoretical statements, any attempt to limit the ontological commitments of a scientific theory to those made in observational statements is strongly rejected. The realist thus believes that what can be said to exist doesn't have to be directly observable. In describing how phenomena occur, realists have re-defined the notion of scientificity by adopting the principle that a statement is scientific only if it is pos-

sible to make observations that would count in some way for or against its truth or falsity. ^{good point} Thus, the realist is relieved of the problems posed by the positivist observation versus theory dichotomy. Furthermore, the use of correspondence rules is seen as frequently expressing causal relations between theoretical entities and observable phenomena. It is because an entity of some kind exists, or has some property that when the specified test conditions are carried out, the predicted results occur. Finally, realists give meaning to theoretical terms in two ways. First ontological definitions are often given to theoretical terms by relating their meanings analogously to some already understood terms.

Often, the use of hypothetical models are ~~used~~ helpful in creating such definitions. Secondly, realists often use terms that they accept as both observational and theoretical. For example, according to Keat and Urry, terms such as 'moon' or 'electric charge' are used to characterize both observable and unobservable items. Assuming that the meanings of such ^{observational} terms are unproblematic in their ~~theoretical~~ uses, the realist can simply maintain that these meanings remain much the same in their non-observational or theoretical uses.

I don't
get
this

In the positivist programs for sociology, emphasis is placed on the scientific method, that is, on empirical observation, measurement and ^{the} experimental method. In their search for empirical regularities, positivist soc-

sociologists often confine their study to that which can be measured. Furthermore, in their study of society, positivists contend that they must adopt a pose of objectivity and value neutrality in their search for universal laws which transcend time and space.

Realist sociologists, on the other hand, argue that the nature of social reality is ~~open~~ opaque, and not immediately understandable. The purpose of sociology is to understand underlying structures and mechanisms that generate empirical observation. These structures and mechanisms have real causal power, and it is the relationship between the underlying mechanisms, observable reality and the way

cause and effect occurs that must be studied. Finally, realist sociologists are historically oriented, and they concentrate ~~of~~ on explaining real human events.

In conclusion, because of their different definitions of causality, positivists and realists wind up studying quite different phenomena. *For the same phenomena in quite different ways!!*

Positivists often confine their study to what is objectively measurable, while realists go a step further and ask why certain events occur, how changes in structure cause change at other levels, and how underlying forces operate in society.

A -

Although this answer is muddled in spots, it is clear you have thought through much of this.

Feudalism and absolute monarchism were incompatible with capitalism for various reasons. Primarily, as each phase passed, changes in the economic, political and ideological spheres occurred, which in turn brought changes in ownership of land and property. It is this transition of control from monarchs and lords to capitalists, along with the rise of non-imperialist cities and the increasing movement of free labor that caused increasing tension between feudalism, absolute monarchism and capitalism.

In the feudal system there existed the Catholic Church, monarchs, lords, and serfs. The Church held the power in that it controlled ideology and the distribution of land. Monarchs and lords were given the 'power of God' by the Church to keep the serfs under control. The

serfs worked the land and gave a certain portion of their work to their lords. The lords and monarchs, in turn, provided protection for both the serfs and the Church. This system was a very dynamic one, ^{how & why?} yet conflict existed between all parties, mainly concerning the control of land and food. Constant peasant rebellions occurred, as did conflicts between monarchs and their lords. Also, because land was the primary source of power, conflicts existed between entire kingdoms. War was a very important enterprise for feudalism because it provided for the expansion of power and control through the ownership of land. Chronically, this led to war, along with the Black Plague caused the demise of feudalism between 1200 AD and 1450 AD. Simultaneously, increased mer-

contile activity and the growth of trade (non-imperialist) ^{between} cities began to take place. Increased war caused many serfs to flee to these cities, which allowed for ^{the} further growth of capitalist trade. All the while, with the decline of feudalism and increased conflict, absolutism began to emerge. Under absolute monarchism, monarchs centralized their power, created standing armies, and taxed their subjects, often mercilessly. In addition, lords were given ownership of land, and serfs were freed. Some became tenant farmers while others moved to the cities. This free movement of labor further bolstered the growth of capitalist enterprise. Many nobles became involved in trade and mercantilism. They succeeded in increasing their wealth through usury, the buying and selling of property and exploit-

ation of their workers. Conflict arose between monarchs and capitalists, because in order to build and maintain their standing armies, more revenue was needed. As a result, the monarchs began to tax the capitalists heavily. For example, in England, where the absolutist period was very short-lived, the king, after the loss of the 100 years war with France, attempted to rebuild his standing army. In order to do so, he taxed the nobility. However, having a strong tradition of unification, they collectively refused to pay. Actually, they were making more money from trade and mercantile activity than they were from the pursuit of war. Thus, in 1648, the nobility revolted, creating the re-establishment of Parliament and the formation of a constitutional monarchy. This brought about a drastic change

this isn't exactly right

in control in England. The king no longer held absolute power, but he now shared it with the capitalist nobility. Capitalist activity hence began to grow and flourish with the transition of control from the monarchy to the capitalists. The same basic dynamics occurred in France and Germany, although under different conditions and at different periods. Along with these economic ^{and political} changes occurred changes in ideology. With the transition from feudalism to absolutism, the Church lost much of its land, and with growth of the study of science, much of its ideological strength.

As capitalism grew, and the philosophies of science spread, a new ideology was needed to provide legitimacy for the new emerging social order.

In England, this new ideology became that of individualism (it was encouraged by the ^{along with science} by the

capitalists, since both proved to be profitable ways of legitimizing their newly created forms of control.

In conclusion, capitalism was incompatible with feudalism and absolute monarchism because the underlying economic dynamics were opposed to each other. Capitalism meant a change in ownership and control, which in turn affected the political and ideological spheres of European society.

B+

In Germany, the transition from feudalism to capitalism occurred later than it did in France or England. This was so because German society was highly feudal and well parcelized. There existed many small city-states that were very successful in remaining autonomous. Central to the success of these city-states was a well established capitalist ^{trade} network that existed throughout most of western Germany and surrounding areas. From 1450-1600 these city states reached their point of ascendancy, with the most commercial activity in all of Europe taking place here. The downfall of these city-states occurred during the wars of ~~the~~ reformation. ^{Many} Lots of little wars were fought, especially between the northern part of Germany, which was Protestant, and the southern half, which was Catholic.

The outcome of all this was emergence of three large city-states, Bavaria, Saxony and Prussia. Prussia was ruled by the Junkers, a highly organized, efficient ~~and~~ militant group.

Eventually this group unified Germany. In the 18th century, Prussian power ^{extended} throughout east Germany and Poland. When the war with Napoleon took place, the Junkers won. ^{with whom} As a result, their power base shifted westward ^{Why?}, and their population increased from 3 million to 10 million people.

In 1816, feudal dues were commuted, land ownership became defined, and a market was then created for the buying and selling of land.

not clear
The highly efficient Junkers worked hand in hand with the capitalists in a sort of protection racket; ^{group} one took care of the other and vice versa, provided that they let each other alone. ~~later~~ ^{later} on the ~~latter~~

part of the nineteenth century, when France declared war on the German states to reclaim disputed border lands, the Prussians, under the rule of Bismarck, succeeded in defeating France. In 1871, Bismarck and the Junkers unified Germany under the Prussian banner. German unification worked to the advantage of both the Junkers and the capitalists. Eventually however, the capitalists ^{in what sense?} outnumbered the Junkers and took over. Thus, no absolute monarch ~~never~~ really existed in Germany. The transition to capitalism occurred directly from feudalism.

German social philosophy reflects the slow transition from feudalism to capitalism. ~~that occurred there.~~ Historically, German intellectual thought was well advanced, highly idealized, and predominant throughout Europe, up

to the time of Hitler. The key issues of German thought were issues of abstraction. They dealt with, for instance, the rise of science, the beginnings of the bureaucratic state, the increasing secularization of life, and the rise of self consciousness of individuals in society. The main philosophers that shall be discussed here are Kant, Hegel, and Feuerbach.

Emmanuel Kant was one of Europe's premier ~~empiricists~~ ^{philosophers}. He argued that two kinds of things existed in the world. The first type he called phenomena. It included what man could observe objectively, mainly things in nature. The second type of objects, noumena, consisted of everything else, including morals, society, values, ethics, religion - anything that had to do with human thought. Because

neumena ~~wasn't~~^{were'n't} scientifically testable, Kant argued that it could not be objectively studied. A later philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel, on the other hand, tried to gear social philosophy away from science, toward idealism. He is often quoted as stating that "a people without a metaphysics is a people without a spirit." Hegel's method was one of speculation and self reflection. He believed that there existed universal principles of thought which were eternal, and that these ideas formed the soul of man. Hegel's main contributions to philosophy were the introduction of the dialectic method and the idea of the "geist". In the dialectic method, one thesis produces ~~an~~ an antithesis, which together form a synthesis, which in turn produces another antithesis, and so on.

The "geist", for Hegel, meant that ideas existed independent of man, and as the "geist" unfolded through the course of history, it changed reality. Hegel's philosophy could be characterized as conservative because it implied that man's social condition was alright because the "geist" had brought man to where he was.

Furthermore, it implied that man had no real control over his ~~the~~ world, since ideas came to him from outside. In contrast, Feuerbach, a student of Hegelianism, argued that the "geist" was a product of Hegel's own imagination. He further argued that the "geist" was then worshipped as a god. Feuerbach believed that the 'geist' led to the alienation of man from himself, because like religious ideals, the 'geist' was beyond man's grasp.

an ideal man had created but could not control or live up to. Feuerbach argued in favor of secular humanism, pointing out that man was the source of activity in the world, and that because of this, man had the power to improve his lot. Along with the idea of alienation, Feuerbach contributed to philosophy by using the method of critique, that is, he was very skeptical of all that he saw and learned, and he criticized openly what he did not agree with. He is often called a left Hegelian. Hegel, too, used the notion of critique.

In conclusion, German social philosophy, with its emphasis on abstract principles reflected the slow transition from feudalism to capitalism. It never dealt with, as in England or France, man's material condition or man's relations

to other human beings. Not until Feuerbach
and Marx did German social philosophy
come down to earth.

And why didn't it? Because German
society hadn't !!!

A

A very
nice exam