

Agenda

1. Relational sociology
2. Network relations
3. Fields and forms of capital

1. Foundations

Methods overview

Classical (European) social theory

2. The individual in society (bottom-up)

Ethnicity, race, and nationality

Disability

Gender and sexuality

Class and culture

3. Populations and publics (top-down)

Inequality and stratification

Demography

Politics and economy

Social movements

4. Social systems (middle-out)

Interaction

Institutional change

Organizations and groups

Media and technology

Roadmap

1. Foundations

Methods overview

Classical (European) social theory

2. The individual in society (bottom-up)

Ethnicity, race, and nationality

Disability

Gender and sexuality

Class and culture

3. Populations and publics (top-down)

Inequality and stratification

Demography

Politics and economy

Social movements

4. Social systems (middle-out)

Interaction

Institutional change

Organizations and groups

Media and technology

Roadmap

1. Foundations

Methods overview

Classical (European) social theory

2. The individual in society (bottom-up)

Ethnicity, race, and nationality

Disability

Gender and sexuality

Class and culture

3. Populations and publics (top-down)

Inequality and stratification

Demography

Politics and economy

Social movements

4. Social systems (middle-out)

Interaction

Institutional change

Organizations and groups

Media and technology

Relational Sociology

Relational sociology

“Relational” sociology puts *relations* at the core of social theory.

But what is a “relation”?



Relations are not...

Large-scale institutions

- ∴ **E.g. structural functionalism:**
(People do what they do because of the function of society as a whole and their particular institutional context.)
- ∴ **E.g. class analysis (conflict theory):**
(People do what they do because of their relationship to systems of economic production.)



Relations are not...

Individual actors

- ∴ **E.g. rational choice theory:**
(Individuals choose how to behave based on internal preferences.)
- ∴ **E.g. identity analysis (conflict/interactionist theories):**
(People act based on the values associated with their background and needs.)

Relational sociology

“Relational” sociology puts *relations* at the core of social theory.

But what is a “relation”?

Relations are...

The relationships, contrasts, interactions, and affiliations that situate us among one another

(Details forthcoming...)



Relational sociology

Relations 'all the way down'

- **Basic claim:** starting with relations we should be able to explain both individual behavior *and* large-scale social forces
- Addresses micro–macro divide by saying they are both result of relational processes and structures
- Growing trend in social theory since 1990s
Harrison White; Pierre Bourdieu
- Especially popular among researchers of culture, taste, organizations, and institutional structure

Relational sociology

Two main schools of thought on what relations “are” in relational sociology:

Relations as *bonds*

- ∴ Network theory
- ∴ Symbolic interactionism



Relations as *contrasts*

- ∴ Field theory
- ∴ Boundary analysis



Image credit

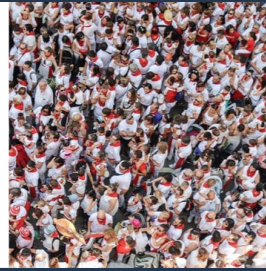


Photo by [San Fermin](#)
[Pamplona - Navarra](#)

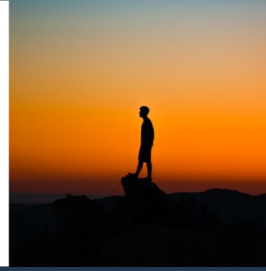


Photo by [Austin Mabe](#)



Screen capture from [Jane the Virgin](#)



Screen capture from [Bob's Burgers](#)



Screen capture from [Bob's Burgers](#)