

Abramson, Mark. *Sociological Theory: An Introduction to Concepts, Issues and Research*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1981, 288 pp., \$17.95 cloth.

Mark Abramson's *Sociological Theory* is designed to be a textbook for introductory level classes in theory. The book is structured in a somewhat different way than the commonly encountered books on theory. Rather than being organized according to epochs or schools of thought or individual theorists it places the emphasis on questions. By doing such, Abramson creates three major groupings under which the ideas of pertinent theorists are discussed.

The section on the individual in society embodies a number of micro-sociological theories based on concepts borrowed from psychology (George H. Mead, Margaret Mead, W.I. Thomas), as well as grand theories (Parsons, Durkheim, and Marx). The next section is on social structure, process and change where the parts of the theories of Park, Burgess, Marx, Weber, Davis and Moore, Simmel, Durkheim, and Merton are reviewed. It is quite surprising not to find a section of Parsons in this part, where it deserves the greatest attention.

The last section on the nature and form of sociological theory presents the theories of Spencer, Durkheim, Homans, Comte, Weber, Lazarsfeld, and Merton. All of the issues in this chapter deal with the familiar yet unresolved problem: should the path to be followed for sociology to become a scientific discipline be the same path as the natural sciences. Some of the vital questions discussed are the myth of value-freeness, neutrality, and operationalism.

As the author indicates, this book is oriented to force the student to *think* over some issues, try to theorize, bring different interpretations, and establish links between non-familiar as well as familiar issues. Such an organization of the textbook is much more demanding on the instructor since it requires the ability to gather the different aspects of a theorist's thought and present it in a coherent form.

The extensive use of empirical research in providing examples is a point in the book's favor, and is quite useful in getting across

certain ideas. The wide range of these examples gives more flavor and enlarges the vision of the student.

The language of the book is clear and straightforward. Even the most intangled, complex issues are dealt with ease and clarity. This, of course, is in concordance with the *raison d'être* of the book. Evading some of the problems encountered in textbook writing, Abramson's sociological theory is a very good account of the field, especially for introductory level courses.

Washington University

Hulya Gurtuna