



SST-04 A Suggested Mapping

Sociologist / Tradition	Key Concept	Interpretation in SST Core Mechanisms
Karl Marx	Class conflict, exploitation	Power shaping external constraints and controlling the distribution of satisfiers and contra-satisfiers
Max Weber	Meaning, legitimacy, authority	Cultural constraints and power shaping behaviour through legitimacy and authority structures
Émile Durkheim	Social facts, collective conscience	Cultural and structural constraints regulating behaviour and shaping social circumstances
Georg Simmel	Social interaction forms	Social circumstances emerging from micro-level interactions among agents
George Herbert Mead	Symbolic interactionism	Cultural meaning systems shaping needs, interpretation of circumstances, and reflexive behaviour
Erving Goffman	Dramaturgy, presentation of self	Behavioural strategies and signalling within specific social circumstances
Pierre Bourdieu	Habitus, field, capital	Behaviour shaped by internalised dispositions operating within structured constraint landscapes
Anthony Giddens	Structuration theory	Reciprocal relationship between constraints and behaviour through ongoing social practices
Margaret Archer	Morphogenetic cycle	Constraints shaping social circumstances and behaviour, with power influencing structural change
Niklas Luhmann	Social systems as communication	Communication systems shaping cultural constraints and social circumstances
Robert K. Merton	Strain theory, unintended consequences	Constraint misalignment producing contra-satisfiers and adaptive or deviant behaviour
James Coleman	Rational action theory	Behaviour oriented toward securing satisfiers in pursuit of needs



Talcott Parsons	Social system integration	Institutional constraints coordinating behaviour through normative expectations
Michel Foucault	Power/knowledge, discourse	Power operating through cultural constraints and shaping social circumstances
Jürgen Habermas	Communicative action	Communication processes coordinating behaviour and shaping shared circumstances
Immanuel Wallerstein	World-systems theory	Global structural constraints shaping distribution of satisfiers and economic behaviour

Most sociological traditions emphasise **one mechanism** of the broader system:

SST Core Mechanism	Sociological Traditions Emphasising It
Constraints (external, structural, cultural)	Durkheim, Parsons, Weber, Wallerstein
Social circumstances (situations created through interaction)	Simmel, Goffman, Mead, Luhmann
Needs	Coleman, rational choice traditions
Satisfiers / Contra-satisfiers (distribution of opportunities and harms)	Marx, Merton
Behaviour (automatic or reflexive responses)	Mead, Bourdieu, Coleman, Giddens
Power (reshaping constraints and controlling satisfiers)	Marx, Weber, Foucault, Archer

Provenance and Links

This module draws on ideas from:

- general systems theory
- sociological systems approaches
- complexity science
- morphogenetic social theory.

Practical Exercise

Choose one tradition and consider:

- What aspect of social systems does it explain particularly well?
- What aspects might require additional mechanisms?