

Exam in SAM 525 Risk, Society and Ethics
School exam, individual, written. No aids of any kind permitted.

December 19, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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The exam consists of five (5) exercises, and you are expected to answer four (4) of them. Each question will have equal weighting in the evaluation.

- 1) Explain the techno-scientific perspective and the social constructivist perspective of risk.

It is expected that the candidate should start on elaborate on following questions in order to explain the techno-scientific perspective.

- What risks exist?
- How should we measure them?
- How should information about risk be effectively communicated to the public?
- How to reduce 'bias' in the public's response
- How do people respond cognitively to risks?
- What worldviews shape their responses?
- Provides normative perspectives regarding risk, combined with a deliberative view of politics

Thereafter explain.

- How is risk understood in different social contexts.
- Why are some dangers named 'risks' and other not?
- How does risk operate as symbolic measure?
- What is the situated context of risk?

Finally

- How do discourses and practises around risk operate in the construction of subjectivity, embodiment and social relations.
- How does risk operate as part of governmental strategies and rationalities?
- How are risk assemblages configured?

It is not required but, the good candidate will be able to present table from pp49 Lupton

Discuss why we often fear “the other” and compare how risk linked to otherness concurs with the understanding of risk in the technoscientific perspective.

Epistemological approaches to risk in social sciences (Lupton pp 49)

Epistemological position	Associated perspective and theories	Key questions
Realism. Risk is an objective hazard, threat or danger that exists and can be measured independently of social, cultural processes. Risk perceptions may be distorted or biased through social and cultural framework	Techno-scientific perspective and theories Cognitive psychology	What risks exist? How should we measure them? How should information about risk be effectively communicated to the public? How to reduce ‘bias’ in the public’s response How do people respond cognitively to risks? What worldviews shape their responses?
Weak constructionist /critical realism. Risk is an objective hazard, threat or danger that is inevitable mediated through social and cultural processes and can never be known in isolation from these processes	Risk Society perspective Risk governance perspective?	What is the relationship of risk to the structures and processes of late modernity? How is risk understood in different social contexts. Why is some dangers named ‘risks’ and other not? How does risk operate as symbolic measure? What are the situated context of risk?
Strong constructionist Nothing is risk in itself – what we understand to be risk (or hazard or danger) is the product historically and culturally contingent ‘ways of seeing’	‘Governmentality’ perspective. Post structuralism . Biophilosophy	How do discourses and practises around risk operate in the construction of subjectivity, embodiment and social relations. How does risk operate as part of governmental strategies and rationalities? How are risk assemblance configured?

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2) Explain the difference between methodological individualism and methodological holism, and elaborate what Emile Durkheim means with “collective consciousness”.

The candidates are expected to start with following statement from Durkheim

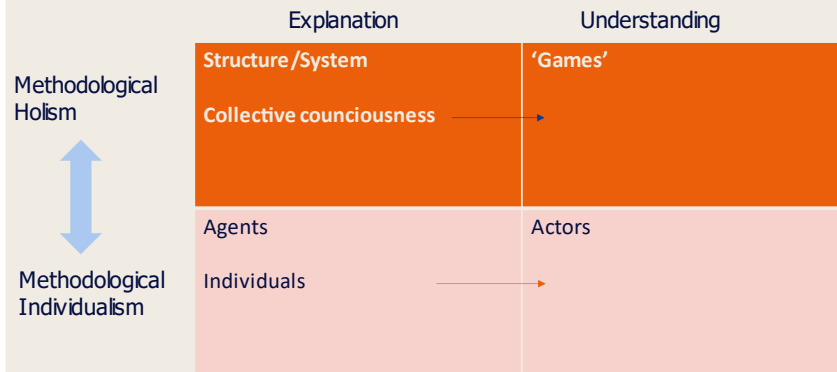
“Society is not a mere sum of individuals, Rather, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which as its own character”

“The determining cause of a social fact should be sought among the social facts preceding it and not among the states of individual consciousness...the function of social fact should be sought in relation to some social end”.

Thereafter present the matrix

Explain the difference between methodological individualism and methodological holism and elaborate what Emile Durkheim means with "collective consciousness".

Our matrix



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Followed by elaborating on holism and individualism.

Explain the difference between methodological individualism and methodological holism and elaborate what Emile Durkheim means with "collective consciousness".

Methodological Holism



Methodological Individualism

A system in balance/
equilibrium.
Social integration.
Collective
consciousness



«The elementary unit of social life is the individual human action. To explain social institutions and social change is to show how they arise as result of the action and interaction of individuals»
(Jon Elster)

Institutions represents
constraints and
opportunities

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The good student will manage to deeper explore how collective consciousness.

- An ontology of 'social facts' forming an order external to individual consciousness and not explicable by reference to human nature
- A methodology wherein social facts are explained by their function in relation to some social end.

- Functional mechanisms working through the medium of the 'collective consciousness' and connecting social ends to the overall level of social integration needed if a society is to flourish
- An epistemology, so far undisclosed, which warrants our subscribing to these components.

3) Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

The candidates have to describe the following

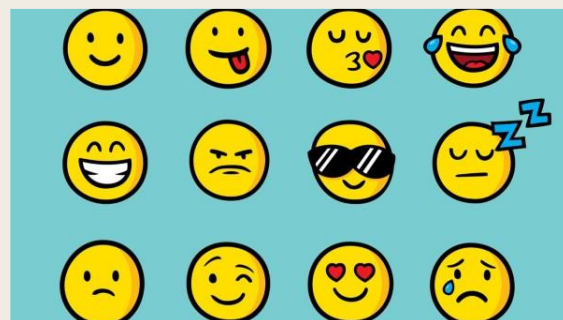
- Human actions have meaning. Actions embody intentions, express emotions, are done for reasons.
- The distinction between the meaning of an action and what the actor means by it relates to one between what words mean and what people mean by them
- Human practises are imbued with normative expectations. They embody ideas about what one so entitled to expect of people and are reinforced guilt and shame in the face reproach for failure to live up to them.
- Animals have beliefs but does not hold theories about the nature of things.

Thereafter the good candidates may follow up with

Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

Human actions have meaning. Actions embody intentions, express emotions, are done for reasons.

- There are conventions and symbols which others can be expected to draw upon



Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

The distinction between the meaning of an action and what the actor means by it relates to one between what words mean and what people mean by them

- Language is a prime candidate for the key to the peculiarity of social life
- The connections between action, thought and language are at least intimate.

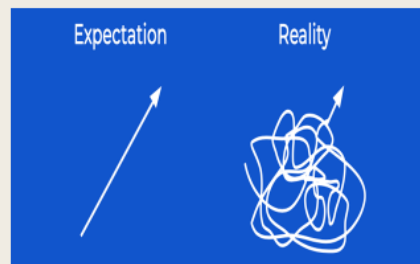


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Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

Human practices are imbued with normative expectations. They embody ideas about what one is entitled to expect of people and are reinforced by guilt and shame and reproach for failure to live up to them.

- A broader ethics
- A religious belief
- the world according to a set of unseen beliefs, values and sacred beings



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Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

Animals have beliefs, but does not hold theories about the nature of things.

We hold theories of human beings which are influenced by social science

- - psycho therapy
- - game theory
- - cultural theory



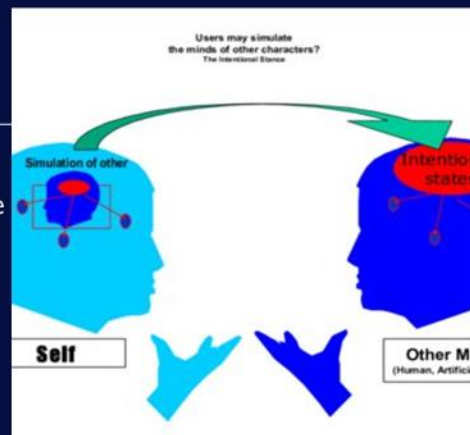
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Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

The question of the other mind

- To arrive to the meaning of action we need the actors' interpretations
- We need one set of interpretation of data to know that one see someone sitting in chair, a second interpretation to know that someone waving goodbye.
- Double hermeneutics



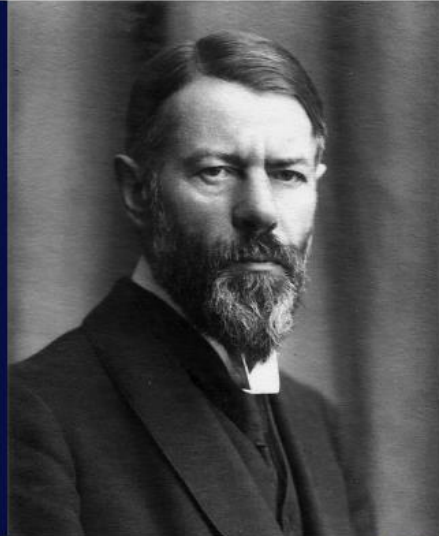
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The candidates have to present a minimum understanding of the ideal types of action by Weber.

Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber.

- The science of society attempts the interpretative understanding of social action.
- Action – ‘all human action when and in so far as acting individual attaches subjective meaning to it’
- Social action – ‘action which take account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course’



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Describe meaning when we refer to human action, and account for the four ideal types of human action developed by Max Weber (1864 - 1920).

- Instrumentally rational action (zweckrational) → Economic (game theory, consistent preferences)
- Value rational action (wertrational) → Ideal, heroism.
The end justifies the means
A complex set of meaning
- Traditional action → A (dull) reaction of custom and norms
- Affective actions → by simple unreflective desire (a drink because your thirsty)

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4) Account for the concepts “Modernity”, “Late Modernity” and “Risk Society”.

The good student will start with contrasting pre modernity and modernity,

Account for the concepts "modernity", "late modernity" and "Risk Society".

The pre-modern The overriding importance of localized trust	The Modern, Late modernity Trust relationships transferred to outsourced abstract systems
Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship relationships as an organizing mechanism for stabilizing social ties across time and space • The local community as a place that creates a familiar environment • Religious cosmologies as forms of belief and ritual practice that interpret human life and nature as destiny • Past-oriented: Tradition as a means of linking the present and the future together. 	Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationships such as friendship as means of stabilizing social ties • Abstract systems as a means of stabilizing relationships across endless temporal and spatial distances • Future-oriented: hypothetical thinking as a way of connecting past and present (Planning, organizing uncertainties, risk oriented)
Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats and dangers that originate in nature such as the occurrence of infectious diseases, climatic instability, floods and other natural disasters • The threat of human violence from marauding armies, local warlords, bandits and robbers • The risk of falling into religious disfavor and of evil magical influence 	Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats and dangers that are bi-effects of industrialization, capitalist dynamics and finally from the reflexivity of modernity • The threat of human violence is due to the industrialization of war, the atomic effect • The threat of personal meaninglessness caused by the reflexivity of modernity challenge "the self."

The others will probably start with

Account for the concepts "modernity", "late modernity" and "Risk Society".

The industrial society, modernity	Risikosamfunnet
Simple modernization	Reflexive modernization
Productive forces and means of production	The gain due to technical economic progress is overshadowed by the production of risk
Science is institutionalized	Science becomes universally valid, ordinary and demystified
The rise and belief in parliamentary democracy	Sub politics deprives politics of its leading role as a developer of society

Furthermore the good students will elaborate on the Risk Society:

- In the risk society, science has entered a polygamous marriage with economics, politics and ethics.
- Even the smallest probability of accidents is too high, when an accident means destruction.
- Scientific and social rationality have fallen apart - yet remain at the mercy of each other and intertwined.
- The public criticism and unrest is fed mainly by the dialectic between expertise and counter-expertise.
- Conflicting pluralization and diversity of risk definitions. ‘

- The social impact of risk definitions is no longer entirely dependent on their scientific validity. Global risks are also a part of the new reflexivity.
- The risks are still divided by class, but at the same time the systemic and global risk will affect everyone. Distress and poverty are hierarchical; global warming is democratic! The risks represent boomerang effects.
- New social inequalities due to inequality of risk vulnerabilities.

And finalise the discussion with introducing Giddens where Giddens develops the pair of concepts ontological security and trust related to risk.

- Trust is a protective shield; trust face to face, in late modernity faceless commitments and to abstract systems are the rule.
- Ontological security is the very foundation for our identity and trust in the social world as it appears to us. This has implications for our relationship with risk.

5) Discuss similarities and differences between the views of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck on “the Risk Society”.

The good candidate is expected to summarise these matrixes, not every bullet point – but main contrasts between the two Risk societies thinkers.

Discuss similarities and differences between the views of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck on “the Risk Society”.

Beck

- There is an overall increase in risks in modern society
- The amount of civilizational and systemic risks is greater than the reduction that takes place in natural risks
- We must overcome the "organized irresponsibility"
- Cosmopolitan world risk (positive and negative)
- Sub politics

Giddens

- The expert systems have led to significant risk reduction with the help of science and technology
- Natural risks disappear in favor of man-made risks
- In sum, this leads to a reduction of risk
- Our life conditions have not become riskier, but our level of reflection has increased.
- The self must live with the positive opportunities that risk creates - a type of "reflexive awareness"
- Solutions can be found within national and multinational institutions

Discuss similarities and differences between the views of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck on “the Risk Society”.

Comparing Beck and Giddens

Main feature	Ulrich Beck	Anthony Giddens
Emphasis on stability, order, conflict and/or change in “late modernity » and how these are linked to risks	Emphasizes conflict and change	Emphasizes conflict and change
Descriptive or normative	Most descriptive, but with clear policy recommendations on what should be done	Mostly descriptive, few political recommendations
Epistemology	Partly constructivist (Weak constructivist)	Critical realist (Weak constructivist)
Risk characterisation	Risk is the main characteristic of modern society and shows the paradoxes of development	Risk is manufactured uncertainty and an important tag on our time
Are we experiencing faster development of risks in our time than earlier?	Yes	Probable
Basic «tone», leitmotif	Would like to believe in the future, for example, the possibilities of the subpolics, but is fundamental skeptical	Is optimistic about the restoration of trust between expert systems and the civil sector society
What is the solution	Radical upheaval	Modernization of institutions, locally, nationally and globally

Eksamen i SAM 505 Risiko og Samfunnssikkerhet
Skoleeksamen, individuell, skriftlig. Ingen tillatte hjelpemidler

19.12.2023 kl. 09.00 – 1400

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Eksamen består av fem (5) spørsmål. Det er forventet at du besvarer fire (4) av dem. De besvarte oppgavene vil telle likt i vurderingen.
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- 1) Forklar det tekno-vitenskapelige perspektivet og det sosialkonstruktivistiske risikoperspektivet.
- 2) Forklar forskjellen mellom metodologisk individualisme og metodologisk holisme, og utdyp hva Emile Durkheim mener med «kollektiv bevissthet».
- 3) Hva er mening når vi refererer til menneskelig handling, og redegjør for de fire idealtypene for menneskelig handling utviklet av Max Weber.
- 4) Redegjør for begrepene «modernitet», «sen-modernitet» og «Risikosamfunnet».
- 5) Diskuter likheter og forskjeller mellom Anthony Giddens og Ulrich Becks syn på "Risikosamfunnet".