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SOCIOLOGY PAPER -1



BOOK -1

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CONTENTS

TOPIC	PAGE NO.
UNIT I: SOCIOLOGY - THE DISCIPLINE	
An Introduction: What is Sociology?	2
Basic Concepts	3
Modernity & Social Changes in Europe and Emergence of Sociology	17
Scope of Sociology	28
Uses of Sociology	30
Sociology In Relation With The Other Social Sciences	32
Sociology and Common Sense	47
UNIT II: SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE	
What is Science & Scientific method	51
Positivism and its Critique	53
Fact, Value and Objectivity	56
UNIT III: RESEARCH METHODS & ANALYSIS	
Social Research and Its Importance	64
Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods	67
Methods And Techniques Of Social Research	70
UNIT IV: SOCIOLOGICAL THINKERS	
Karl Marx	94
Historical Materialism	94
Alienation	98
Class, Class Struggle and Social Change	107
Emile Durkheim	119
The Division Of Labor In Society	120
Social Facts	125
Suicide	131
Religion & Society	136
Max Weber	140
Social Action	140
Ideal Types	142
Structures of Authority	145
Bureaucracy	152
Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism	154
Talcott Parsons	163
Social System	163
Pattern Variables	168
Robert King Merton	171
Structural functionalism	172
Manifest and latent functions	174
Reference Group	175
Conformity and Deviance	177
G.H. Mead	182
Self and Society	182

SOCIOLOGY - THE DISCIPLINE

IAS GURUKUL

AN INTRODUCTION

What is Sociology?

Sociology which had once been treated as social philosophy, or the philosophy of history, emerged as an independent social science in the 19th century. August Comte, a Frenchman, is traditionally considered to be the father of sociology. Comte is accredited with the coining of the term sociology (in 1839). Sociology is composed of two words: socius, meaning companion or associate; and logos, meaning science or study. The etymological meaning of sociology is thus the science of society. John Stuart Mill, another social thinker and philosopher of the 19th century, proposed the word ethology for this new science. Herbert Spencer developed his systematic study of society and adopted the word “sociology” in his works. With the contributions of Spencer and others it (sociology) became the permanent name of the new science.

The question ‘what is sociology?’ is, indeed, a question pertaining to the definition of sociology. No student can rightfully be expected to enter on a field of study which is totally undefined or unbounded. At the same time, it is not an easy task to set some fixed limits to a field of study. It is true in the case of sociology. Hence it is difficult to give a brief and a comprehensive definition of sociology.

Sociology has been defined in a number of ways by different sociologists. No single definition has yet been accepted as completely satisfactory. In fact, there are as many definitions of sociology as there are sociologists. For our purpose of study a few definitions may be cited here.

1. August Comte, the founding father of sociology, defines sociology as the science of social phenomena subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation”.
2. Kingsley Davis says that Sociology is a general science of society.
3. Harry M. Johnson opines that sociology is the science that deals with social groups.
4. Emile Durkheim defines sociology as the science of social institutions.
5. Park regards sociology as the science of collective behaviour.
6. Small defines sociology as the science of social relations”.
7. Marshal Jones defines sociology as the study of man-in-relationship-to-men”.
8. Ogburn and Nimkoff define sociology as “the scientific study of social life”.
9. Franklin Henry Giddings defines sociology as the science of social phenomena”.
10. Henry Fairchild defines sociology as the study of man and his human environment in their relations to each other”.
11. Max Weber defines sociology as “the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a casual explanation of its course and effects”.
12. Alex Inkeles says “Sociology is the study of systems of social action and of their interrelations”.
13. Kimball Young and Raymond W. Mack define sociology as “the scientific study of the social aspects of human life”.
14. Morris Ginsberg: Of the various definitions of sociology the one given by Morris Ginsberg seems to be more satisfactory and comprehensive. He defines sociology in the following way: In the broadest sense, sociology is the study of human interactions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences.

A careful examination of various definitions cited above, makes it evident that sociologists differ in their opinion about the definition of sociology. Their divergent views about the definition of sociology only reveal their distinct approaches to its study. However, the common idea underlying all the definitions mentioned above is that sociology is concerned with man, his social relations and his society.

Basic Concepts

Society

The concept of society constitutes the core of the discipline of Sociology. It is the very subject matter of Sociology. Sociology is nothing but a scientific study of society and a variety of interactions that unfold within and between individuals and groups. Social beings express their nature by creating and re-creating an organization which guides and controls their behaviour in various ways. This organization, society, liberates and limits activities of men, sets up standards for them to follow and maintain. It is a necessary condition of every fulfillment of life. Society is the web of social relationships and it is always changing. Society exists only where social beings "behave" towards one another in ways determined by their recognition of one another i.e. mutual recognition.

However, society is not limited to human beings. There are animal societies of many degrees. The remarkable social organizations of the insects, such as the ant, the bee, etc., are well known. **Kingsley Davis** argues that irrespective of their types all the societies have certain common needs which must be fulfilled. These needs which may be regarded as "primary needs" define the necessary conditions for the existence of any society. According to Kingsley Davis, these societal needs may be classified into four major categories – the need for population (which include need for nutrition, protection, and reproduction), specialization, solidarity, and continuity. To meet these minimum requirements for survival, animals depend largely upon instinctual learning and communication. This meeting of the basic conditions of continued existence by means of learned, normative behaviour (i.e. culture) rather than primarily by hereditary mechanisms constitutes the major difference between human and animal societies.

Society involves both likeness and difference. Without likeness and the sense of likeness there could be no mutual recognition of "belonging together" and therefore no society. Society exists among those who resemble one another in some degree, in body and in mind, and who are near enough or intelligent enough to appreciate the fact. Society, as **F.H. Giddings** expressed it, rests on "*consciousness of kind.*"

Society, however, also depends on difference. For example, the family rests upon the biological difference between the sexes. There are other natural differences, of aptitude, of capacity, of interest. Further differences are developed in the process of specialization. These differences, natural and developed, show themselves in society in the social division of labour.

According to **MacIver**, *society means likeness and in a society difference is subordinate to likeness*. He argues that the division of labour in society is co-operation before it is division. For it is because people have like wants that they associate in the performance of unlike functions. It may also be borne in mind that while society means likeness, the converse of the

statement is not true. Likeness may exist without giving birth to society. Similarly, while difference is necessary to society difference by itself does not create society. The likeness of men's wants is necessarily prior to the differentiation of social organization. As MacIver observes, "*Primary likeness and secondary difference create the greatest of all social institutions – the division of labour.*"

Harry M. Johnson enlists four characteristics of a society, viz. definite territory, progeny, culture and independence.

Defining Society

"Society is a system of usages and procedures, authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and of liberties." **MacIver and Page**

"The term society refers not to group of people, but to the complex pattern of the norms of interaction, that arise among and between them." **- Lapiere**

"Society is the complex of organized associations and institutions within the community." **- G. D. H. Cole**

"Society is not a group of people; it is the system of relationships that exists between the individuals of the group." **-Prof. Wright**

According to **MacIver**, "*Society is a web of social relationships*". But what is meant by social relationship? Can the relationship existing between fire and smoke or between pen and ink be called social relationship? Obviously not, because psychical awareness of the presence of one another is lacking. Without this awareness, there can be no social relationship, and therefore no society. A social relationship thus implies 'reciprocal awareness'. Society, as **F. H. Giddings** expressed it, rests on "**consciousness of the kind**". This reciprocal recognition may be the "**we-feeling**" of **Cooley** or a "**common propensity**" of **W. I. Thomas**.

If we analyze these definitions it will appear that these fall under two types: (1) **the functional definition** which views society as a process and (2) **the structural definition** which views society as a structure. It should be noted however that there is really no conflict between the two views of society, viz. society viewed as social relationships or as a process and society viewed as a structure. As a matter of fact, these two views complement each other.

From the functional point of view, society is defined as a complex of groups in reciprocal relationship, interacting upon one another, enabling human organisms to carry on their life-activities and helping each person to fulfill his wishes and accomplish his interests in association with his fellows. When we view society as social relationships or as a process, we should bear in mind two features, which characterize society: (i) **mutual recognition**, that is, different members in a society recognize the presence of one another, and orient their behaviour one way or the other. This idea of reciprocal awareness is implied in Giddings' definition of society as "a number of like-minded individuals, who know and enjoy their like-mindedness, and are, therefore, able to work together for common ends". In the case of physical relationship, such as the relationship between a typist

and the typewriter, there is no such mutual recognition. The psychical condition, a characteristic feature of social relationship, is lacking here, (ii) the second feature is a **sense of belonging together** or a **consciousness of kind**, as Giddings puts it. A society consists of people who share attitudes, beliefs and ideals in common. There might, of course, be feuds and mutual hostility among members of a society. But these are, in the nature of things, transitory and occasional. In the words of MacIver: *“Co-operation crossed by conflict marks society wherever it is revealed...”*



Modern Society

From the structural point of view, society is the total social heritage of folkways, mores, and institutions; of habits, sentiments and ideals. The structure of a human society is similar to the structure of a building, which has three components: (i) the building material such as bricks, mortar, beams and pillars, (ii) all these are arranged in a definite order and are placed in relationship to one another, and (iii) all these put together make a building one unit. The same three sets of features can be used to describe the structure of a society. A society consists of (i) males and females, adults and children, various occupational and religious groups and so on, (ii) the interrelationship between various parts (such as relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children and between various groups), and (iii) all the parts of the society are put together to work as a unit. Thus, the term social structure refers to the way the various parts are organized and follow stable patterns of collective rules, roles and activities. Although, the structure itself remains invisible, it silently shapes our actions. The basic elements of social structure which guides our actions are statuses, social roles, norms and values.

Society as a Process and Society as a Structure:

The concepts of **status** and **role** are integral to the understanding of society as a process as well as structure. While *status refers to a position occupied by an individual in a group or in society, role is the expected behaviour of an individual who holds a certain status.*

Status is usually defined as the rank or position of a person in a group, or of a group in relation to other group. In fact, some sociologists prefer to use the term

'position' instead of status. **Role** is the behaviour expected of one who holds a particular status. Each person may hold a number of statuses and be expected to fill roles appropriate to them. In a sense, status and role are two aspects of the same phenomenon. **A status is a set of privileges and duties; a role is the acting out of this set of duties and privileges.**

Status, thus, is the 'socially defined location or place' which an individual occupies in a system of interaction or society. Thus, in any interaction, none of the participant is without status. It should also be clear that every individual occupies multiple statuses. Even a young infant is a son, a grandson, a brother, a nephew, and so on. There is, however, one key status in terms of which the individual is ultimately and evaluated. In modern societies, one's occupation indicates one's key status. Individuals in society play different roles and societies evaluate these roles differently. Some roles are regarded more valuable and the persons who perform these roles are given higher status.

It is important to note that interaction among the members in a social situation takes place on the basis of identity of each participant. This identity of an individual is established either on the basis of his birth or on the basis of his achievements, which refers to his position or status in a group or in a society. Status may be ascribed or achieved. **Ascribed status** is assigned to an individual either on the basis of his birth and biological characteristics such as sex, age and race or the status of his/ her parents. In India caste plays a significant role in determining the status of an individual, which is an example of ascribed status. **Achieved status** is a position which an individual attains through personal efforts. For instance, one can become a doctor, engineer or lawyer by one's own efforts. Persons occupying the status may be replaced but the positions will continue to exist in the social structure.

Each distinctive status, whether ascribed or achieved, has certain role expectation. Role is the expected behaviour of an individual who holds a certain status. **While status is the positional aspect of behaviour, role is the behavioural aspect of a given status or position.** Role may be defined as a pattern of behaviour, structured around specific rights and duties and associated with a particular status position within a group or social situation. A person's role in any situation is defined by the **set of expectations** for his behaviour held by others and by person himself. However, actual performance may vary from individual to individual. **Ralph Linton**, in his famous work '*The Study of Man*', has referred to role as *dynamic aspect of the status* and argued that a role is the totality of all the cultural patterns associated with a particular status.

The concept of role was initially developed by **Ralph Linton**. According to Linton, individuals occupy positions in different aspects of social life. Some examples of this are being a father or mother in a family. A person can also be a teacher in a school. He or she can also simultaneously be an office holder in an association. These positions are called statuses by Linton. In Linton's words, 'statuses are the polar positions... in patterns of reciprocal behaviour'. A polar position comprises 'a collection of rights and duties'. Thus he conceived of status as a group of rights and duties. When a person is enacting these rights and duties, he is said to be performing a role. For example, when a teacher gives a lecture, he is performing his duty or performing his role of a teacher. Linton pointed out that a role is the dynamic side of status. It puts into action the various rights and duties.

Please note that if we consider just a point of time, both status and role would appear to be static concepts. Status is fixed and unchanging. So also is role. Viewed in this context, the society is a structure. However, if we consider a period of time, both status and role would

appear to be dynamic concepts. Status changes in relation to other statuses from time to time. There is a corresponding change in role also. Viewed in the context of period of time, it would thus appear that society is a process and that social relationships are in a state of flux. If there is any equilibrium in society, it is a moving equilibrium. The society is thus viewed both as a process as well as structure. One who studies society must take into account both these views.

As **MacIver** has also said: *“Society exists only as a time-sequence. It is a becoming, not a product”*. This is the essence of society. Thus, society is to be interpreted in a wider sense. It is both a structural and functional organisation. It consists in the mutual interactions and mutual interrelations of the individuals but it is also a structure formed by these relations.

Community

According to **MacIver and Page**, *“wherever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share the basic conditions of a common life, than such a group may be called a community.”* The mark of a community is that one’s life may be lived wholly within it. The basic criterion of community then is that all of one’s social relationships may be found within it. Communities need not always be self-sufficient. Some communities are all-inclusive and independent of others. But modern communities, even very large ones, are much less self-contained. Economic and, increasingly so, political interdependence is a major characteristic of our great modern communities. Communities may exist within greater communities: the town within a region, the region within a nation, and the nation within the world community which, perhaps, is in the process of development.

MacIver defines community as *“an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence.”* The bases of community are *locality* and *community sentiment*. Most communities are settled and derive from the conditions of their locality a strong bond of solidarity. To some extent this local bond has been weakened in the modern world by the extending facilities of communications: this is especially apparent in the penetration into rural areas of dominant urban patterns. But the extension of communication is itself the condition of a larger community. Community sentiment is another key feature of a community. Locality, though a necessary condition, is not enough to create a community. A community, to repeat, is an area of common living. There must be the common living with its awareness of sharing a way of life as well as the common earth. Some scholars argue that a community always occupies a territorial area. The area need not be fixed for ever. The people may change their area of habitation from time to time just as nomadic community does.

Some other important **definitions** of community given by some prominent scholars are as follows:

“Community is a social group with some degree of ‘we-feeling’ and living in given area” **Bogardus**

“Community is the smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life.”

-Kingsley Davis

“Community is any circle of people who live together and belong together in such a way that they do not share this or that particular interest only, but a whole set of interests.”

-Manheim

Difference between Society and Community

While society may be defined as a web of social relationships, community, on the other hand, consists of a group of individuals living in a particular area with some degree of 'we-feeling'. A definite geographic area is not an essential aspect of society but community always denotes a definite locality or geographic area. While society is abstract, community is concrete. Community sentiment or a sense of 'we-feeling' may be present or may not be present in society but community sentiment is an essential element of community. There can be no community in its absence. Society is wider; while there can be more than one community in a society. The objectives and interests of society are more extensive and varied as compared to that of a community. Society involves both likeness and difference. Common interests as well as diverse interests are present in society. But likeness is more important than difference in community. There is common agreement of interests and objectives on the part of members.

Association

An association is a group of people organized for a particular purpose or a limited number of purposes. According to some scholars, to constitute an association there must be, firstly, a group of people. Secondly, these people must be organized ones i.e. there must be certain rules for their conduct in the group. Thirdly, they must have a common purpose of specific nature to pursue. Thus family, church, trade union, music club all are the instances of association. Associations may be formed on several bases, for example, on the basis of duration i.e. temporary or permanent like Flood Relief Association which is temporary and State which is permanent. On the basis of power i.e. sovereign like state, semi-sovereign like university, etc. On the basis of function i.e. biological like family, vocational like Trade Union, recreational like music club, etc.

"An association may be defined as an organisation deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interests which its members share."

- MacIver

Difference between Association and Community

An association, according to MacIver and Page, may be defined as a group organized for the pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common, whereas the mark of a community is that one's life may be lived wholly within it or in other words, its members share the very basic conditions of a common life. Membership of an association is voluntary i.e. individuals are at liberty to join them, while on the other hand, by birth itself individuals become members of a community. An association does not necessarily imply the spatial aspects while a community is marked by a locality. An association may be stable and long-lasting or it may not be so but a community is relatively more stable and permanent. Further, associations may have their legal status but a community has no legal status. Associations may have their own rules and regulations to regulate the relations of their members. They may have written or unwritten rules. A community regulates the behaviour of its members by means of customs, traditions and social norms, etc. Association is partial and it may be regarded as a part of the community. While community on the other hand is integral as it may have within its boundary, several associations.

Thus an association is not a community, but an organization within a community and a community is more than any specific organizations that rise within it. However, association

may become communities at least temporarily over a period of time; for example, the military units may create their own communities when isolated for a period of time. The qualification, expressly organized, enables us to distinguish between association and other social groups. There are many forms and types of social groups, class and crowd, primary and secondary groups, face-to-face groups and great associations. But a social class, for example, is not an association. Organizations established on class lines such as certain political parties are associations, but a class itself is not a group expressly organized to pursue certain ends or to fulfill certain functions. Nor is the group we term a crowd an association, though certain crowds in some situations may acquire the characteristics of temporary associations.

Institutions

Institutions are the forms of procedure which are recognized and accepted by society and govern the relations between individuals and groups. In other words, a social institution refers to an interrelated system of social roles and norms organized about the satisfaction of an important social need or function. The social roles and norms comprising the social institution define proper and expected behaviour oriented to the fulfilment of the particular social, economic, political or physical need. Marriage, education, property, religion, etc. are some of the main institutions in any given society. The concept of institution is one of the most important in the entire field of sociology. In fact, **Durkheim** has gone to the extent of defining sociology as the science of social institutions.

Some important **definitions** of institution are as follows:

“Institutions may be defined as the established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity.”

-MacIver and Page

“Institutions represent the social structure and the machinery through which human society organizes, directs and executes the multifarious activities required to satisfy human needs”.

-H. E. Barnes

“A social institution is a structure of society that is organized to meet the need of people chiefly through well established procedures.”

-Bogardus

Essentially institutions are social in nature. Institutions come into being due to the collective activities of the people. Another important feature is their universality. They exist in all the societies and existed at all the stages of social development. The basic institutions like family, religion, property and some kind of political institutions are observed even in the tribal or primitive societies. Further it is important to note that institutions are nothing but standardized norms and procedures. They prescribe certain ways of doing things. They prescribe rules and regulations that are to be followed, for example, marriage as an institution governs the relations between the husband and wife. Institutions are formed to satisfy some of the most basic and vital needs of man, such as, need for self- preservation, the need for self-perpetuation, the need for self-expression, etc.

Institutions also act as the controlling mechanisms in a society. Institutions like religion, morality, state, government, law, legislation, etc., control the behaviour of men. These mechanisms preserve the social order and give stability to it. Further institutions are relatively permanent.

Institutions normally do not undergo sudden or rapid changes. Changes take place slowly and gradually in them. Institutions are abstract in nature. They are not external, visible or tangible things. Institutions may have their own symbols, material or non-material, for example, the state has flag, emblem, etc. as its symbols while religion may have its own symbols like crucifix, crescent, star, swastika, etc. Institutions, though diverse, are interrelated. The social, economic, political, religious, educational and other types of institutions are essentially interlinked with each other.

Related to the concept of institution are the concepts of **custom, folkways** and **mores**. This section deals with the concept of custom and its interrelationship with the concept of institution. The concepts of folkways and mores are discussed subsequently.

Underlying and sustaining the more formal order of institutions and associations there exists an intricate complex of usages or modes of behaviour. Thus there are accepted procedures of eating, conversing, meeting folks, wooing, training the young, caring for the aged, etc. These socially accredited ways of acting are the customs of society. We conform to the customs of our own society, in a sense, “unconsciously,” for they are a strongly imbedded part of our group life. They are so strongly imbedded, indeed, that we frequently make the error of identifying our particular customs with the only correct ways of doing this or that, or even with human nature itself.

Distinction between institutions and customs: The difference between a social usage or custom on the one hand and an institution on the other is essentially one of degree. Institution implies a more definite recognition. We would call the marriage feast an institution, but various courtship practices are better named customs. Marriage itself is an institution and not a custom. Institutions have external insignia, marks of public recognition, which customs as such do not require. The term “institution” stresses the impersonal factor in social relationships. When we speak of customs we think of the accepted ways in which people do things together, in personal contacts. When we speak of institutions we think rather of the system of controls that extends beyond personal relations.

Institutions are often classified into (i) *Primary institutions* and (ii) *Secondary institutions*. The most basic institutions which are found even in primitive societies like religion, family, marriage, property, some kind of political system, are primary in character. As societies grew in size and complexity, institutions became progressive and more differentiated. Accordingly, a large number of institutions are evolved to cater to the secondary needs of people. They may be called secondary institutions. For example, education, examination, law, legislation, constitution, parliamentary procedure, business etc.

William Graham Sumner, an American Sociologist, viewed man as pitted against nature on one hand and against other men with a competing economic interest, on the other. The cooperation and conflict are the basic processes among the members of the society. In their attempt to conquer nature individuals engage in cooperation with each other. Similarly, individuals having common or compatible economic interests join hands and form groups in their struggle against other groups and individuals having conflicting economic interest. In their struggle for survival the social groups spontaneously develop various ways of acting. The best and fittest under the particular conditions are selected. These methods are repeated and their repetition produces habits in the individual and custom in the group. These persisting ways of doing things that

develop in the spontaneous and unconscious manners are called *Folkways*. They arise no one knows when and how and grow as if by the play of internal life and energy.

He further argued that some folkways are considered crucial for the survival of the group. The special significance attached to these folk ways is manifested in the form of special sanctions which existed against their violation. Such folkways were called by Sumner as '*Mores*'. According to Sumner, folkways also form the basis of group cohesion. Thus members of a group having similar folk ways develop a strong "*we feeling*" also termed as "*in-group*" feeling while groups having different folk ways display a sense of distrust and hostility towards others have been termed as "*out-group*" feelings. Each group, therefore, nourishes its pride and vanity, boasts of its own superiority and looks with contempt towards outsiders. To this attitude of superiority concerning the folkways of one's "in- group" and of judging others in terms of these folkways, Sumner gave the name *ethnocentrism*.

He argued that the subject matter of sociology was the study of evolution, nature and functions of *social institutions*, both crecive and enacted. The *crecive institutions* are those which develop spontaneously in an unplanned manner like folkways and mores. While *enacted institutions* consist of the laws that are the result of conscious and deliberate human efforts. The crecive ones are more akin to primary institutions whereas the enacted ones resemble secondary institutions. Thus according to Sumner, folkways are simply the customary, normal, habitual ways a group does things. Mores are those strong ideas of right and wrong which require certain acts and forbid others. Mores are time and space bound. They keep changing according to time and situations.

Culture

The classic definition of culture, framed by E.B. Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871) reads, "**Culture.... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.**"

Stated more simply, culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society. In other words, culture is the totality of learned and socially transmitted behaviour from one generation to the next. It includes symbols signs and languages, besides religion, rituals, beliefs and artifacts. In fact, culture is a guiding force in everyday life. It is the culture that distinguishes one society from the other. Each society has a culture of its own that is historically derived and passed on from one generation to another and constantly enriched by those who live it.

Some of the important **definitions** of culture are as follows:

"Culture is the expression of our nature in our modes of living and our thinking, intercourse, in our literature, in religion, in recreation and enjoyment."
- MacIver

Culture is "the **super-organic** environment as distinguished from the organic or physical, the world of plants and animals."
- Spencer

“Culture is the sum total of human achievements, material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically, i.e., by tradition and communication vertically as well as horizontally.”

- Mazumdar

Thus, on the basis of various viewpoints mentioned above from various sociologists and anthropologists, some of the chief characteristics of culture have been summarized in this section. Firstly, culture is shared in common by the members of a given society or community. Culture, therefore, refers not to the beliefs and activities of individuals, but to those of groups or people who are organized in communities. It is fundamentally a social phenomenon. Secondly, culture is learnt and acquired by human beings in interaction with others. An individual acquires the characteristics of his parents and his group in two ways. On the one hand, he acquires the physical characteristics and features of his parents, such as skin colour, stature, texture of hair and colour of the eyes, through genetic transmission, over which he has no control. On the other hand, he learns and acquires the thoughts, attitudes, language and habits of his parents, and through them, of his group, by way of cultural transmission. Thirdly, culture is not only learnt and acquired by individuals in a social context, but it is also accumulated and transmitted from generation to generation, through the mechanism of symbolic communication or language.

Herskovits, an American anthropologist, has also identified certain characteristics of culture in his book *Man and His Works*. He argues that **culture consists of man made part of the environment**, in other words, it is socially created. He states that culture is learned, thus implying that it is an acquired behaviour. He further argues that culture derives from the biological, environmental, psychological, and historical components of human experience. Culture is structured – it consists of organized patterns of thinking feeling and behaving. Culture is dynamic. Culture is variable, it is relative. Culture exhibits regularities that permit its analysis by the methods of science.

There is consensus among a large body of scholars that culture constitutes a structural unity, in that its various elements or constituent parts are mutually inter-related and inter-dependent. Thus, it is possible, for the purpose of analysis and understanding to delineate the major components or divisions of culture. The major components of culture, which are universal in nature, can be summarized as follows: technology, economic organisation, social organisation, political organisation, ideology, arts and language. Technology refers to the system of tools, implements and artifacts, made and used by a people to meet their basic needs. Economic organisation includes the techniques which are employed by a people in organising the production and distribution of goods and services. Social organisation refers to the framework of social and inter-personal relations. Political organisation refers to the ways and methods of controlling conflict, and deals with the maintenance of the social order. Ideology includes a guiding set of beliefs, values and ideals. Arts include the forms which ensure the fulfilment of man's aesthetic urges. Language is the medium through which all the above operate.

Robert Bierstedt, in his book *The Social Order*, has classified the contents of culture into three categories, i.e. **ideas, norms** and **material**. In other words, the components of culture may be classified into three dimensions, i.e., cognitive, normative and material. Ideas refer to the cognitive dimension of culture which includes beliefs and knowledge. Cognition is the process that enables humans to comprehend and to relate to their surroundings. Thus, the first and the most important component of culture is idea, which consists of myth, superstitions, scientific facts, art and religion. The normative dimension is the second large component of culture. It includes rules, expectations and standardized procedures, in short, ways of behaving in almost all the

situations that we confront and in which people participate. The normative dimension of culture is of critical importance in promoting recurrence and predictability in human interaction. Norms can be classified as folkways, mores, customs and laws, etc. which guide individual conduct.

The third major component of culture is the material culture, referring to what we have or possess as members of society. The culture provides knowledge, rules for organizing work and tools for human survival. Material culture refers mainly to basic conditions, which generally include material items that the members of a society have and use, and also to science, technology and instruments of production, transport and communication. Material culture is often contrasted with non-material culture, under which the cognitive and normative dimensions of culture are classified, refers to intangible product of human creation. In simpler terms, culture may be divided into *material* and *non-material culture*. Non-material culture (implying cognitive and normative dimension) consists of the words people use, the ideas, norms, customs, and beliefs they hold, and the habits they follow. Material culture consists of manufactured objects such as tools, furniture, automobiles, buildings, roads, bridges, and, in fact any physical substance which has been changed and used by people. Such manufactured objects are called artifacts.

Culture is often confused with society, but the two words have different meanings. Whereas a culture is a system of norms and values, a society is a relatively independent, self-perpetuating human group which occupies a territory, shares a culture, and has most of its associations within this group. A society is an organization of people whose association is with one another. A culture is an organized system of norms and values which people hold. In other words, society may be perceived as a chain of social relations among groups of individuals who are held together by commonly shared institutions and processes. All processes of the human life-cycle are carried out and regulated in society. Thus, there is an integral reality of the individual, culture and society. All these are mutually inter-dependent, so that any one of them cannot be adequately understood without reference to the other. Culture depends for its existence and continuity on groups of individuals whose social relations form society.

Further, though man is generally defined as a social animal, but man's social nature is not particularly unique to him. A society can exist even at the sub-human level. Ants and bees, for example, have genuine societies. The chimpanzees in the wild live in their society much like human beings: they form stable relationships; they move about and hunt in groups. Culture exists only in human societies. In other words, there can be an animal society without culture. Consequently, what differentiates man qualitatively from other species of animals is not his social nature, but his culture. Man is essentially a cultural or symbolic animal. Man's capacity for symbolic communication or language sharply differentiates him from other animals. Language plays a crucial role in the process of enculturation, whereby the individual acquires and imbibes the value, beliefs, customs and habits of his society. Language facilitates the sharing and accumulation of experiences and skills; it is also instrumental in the transmission of cultural traditions from one generation to another. It is worth noting that while among the animals the basic needs are satisfied through the mechanism of instincts, wherever in man they are fulfilled and regulated through culture. Thus, in actual life, society and culture cannot be separated. Even though culture is a broader category, it cannot exist and function without society. Society, in other words, is a necessary pre-condition for culture. Similarly, neither society nor culture can exist independent of human beings.

Culture also needs to be distinguished from race. **Race** may be defined as a human population whose members share some hereditary biological characteristics which separate them from other groups. It must be noted that racial features are largely determined by genetic and biological factors, whereas cultures and language are learnt, acquired and transmitted through training and education. In this context it is worth highlighting the role of culture in determining the sex roles in society. In human societies, men and women differ not only in anatomical and physical features, but also in respect of behaviour, role and attitude. It is generally held that men and women behave differently because of their biological differences as nature has prescribed different roles and behaviour patterns for them. This is mistaken view. The differences between the roles and behaviour patterns of men and women, though related to certain anatomical and physical processes, are not entirely determined by them. Sex roles and traits, in other words, are not biologically given, they are conditioned by culture.

Margaret Mead, a distinguished American anthropologist, made a comparative study of the respective role of men and women in three primitive societies in New Guinea. She found that in each of these cultures, the sex roles were radically different from those of Western culture. For example, in the Tchambuli tribe, women are masculine and men feminine, in terms of Western cultural standards. Women are dominant, responsible and are engaged in aesthetic matters, and with being charming. Among the Arapesh, both men and women show feminine traits; they do not indulge in aggressive behaviour. Among the Mundugumor, both men and women exhibit masculine traits. Their behaviour reflects violence and aggressiveness. Mead, therefore, concluded the sex roles are culturally conditioned.

Another distinction of significance is that of **culture and civilization**. Alfred Weber is well known for his cultural sociology and the analysis of the distinction between the concepts of culture and civilization. Culture and civilization are closely related terms. **Civilization** refers to a historical phase of culture. A civilization is characterised by certain distinctive features, such as cities and urbanization, occupational specialization, monumental structures such as temples, palaces and tombs, classes and hierarchies, and above all, the art of writing. For example, civilization emerged for the first time in human history as early as 4th millennium B.C. in ancient Mesopotamia. Some of the important points of difference between culture and civilization may be summarized as follows. Firstly, civilization has precise standard of measurement, but not culture. Secondly, civilization is always advancing, but not culture. Civilization is unilinear and cumulative and tends to advance indefinitely. Cultural on the other hand, advances slowly and is often subject to retrogression. In contemporary scenario, rise in religious fundamentalism in some societies can be cited as an example of this. Thirdly, civilization is borrowed without change or loss, but not culture. Further, civilization is external and mechanical while culture is internal and organic. In this context **MacIver** appropriately remarks, "*Civilization is what we have, culture is what we are*".

Real and ideal culture: The ideal culture includes the formally approved folkways and mores which people are supposed to follow (the cultural norms); the real culture consists of those which they actually practice. In most societies some behaviour patterns are generally condemned yet widely practiced. In some places these illicit behaviour patterns have existed for centuries side by side with the cultural norms which are supposed to outlaw them. **Malinowski** cites as an example of this type of behaviour among *Trobriand Islanders*, a group whose incest taboos extend to third and fourth cousins. Similarly, selling cigarettes and other tobacco products to children may be banned and declared illegal as a norm but yet widely practiced in reality.

Diffusion: The process by which culture traits or complexes spread from one society to another or one part of a society to another.

Acculturation: The modification of the culture of a group or an individual through contact with one or more other cultures and the acquiring or exchanging of culture traits. In other words, it refers to the process whereby an individual or a group acquires the cultural characteristics of another through direct contact and interaction. From an individual point of view this is a process of social learning. From a social point of view acculturation implies the diffusion of particular values, techniques and institutions and their modification under different conditions. It may give rise to culture conflict and to adaptation leading to a modification of group identity. Some scholars defined acculturation as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into first hand contact, with subsequent change in the original cultural patterns of both groups.

Culture shock: The often rather severe psychological and social maladjustment many individuals experience when they visit or live in a society different from their own. Culture shock involves bewilderment due to new customs, unknown expectations, a feeling of being conspicuous, "different," and foreign, and often a foreign language.

Ethnocentrism: An attitude of regarding one's own culture or group as inherently superior. The ethnocentric attitude judge the worth of other cultures in terms of its own cultural, and since other cultures are, of course, different, they are held to be inferior, Ethnocentrism reflects an inability to appreciate the viewpoint of others whose cultures have, for example, a different morality, religion, or language. The term was introduced by **William G. Sumner** in his work *Folkways*. Ethnocentric view is seen as a threat to the inter-group solidarity and communal harmony in a complex society where diverse groups belonging to different-different cultural backgrounds live together. However, for an individual ethnocentrism may be appealing because it reaffirms the individual's "belongingness" to the group. It is also considered functional for intra-group solidarity. It is argued that ethnocentric groups seem to survive better than tolerant groups because ethnocentrism reinforces nationalism and patriotism. Without ethnocentrism, a vigorous national consciousness is probable impossible. Nationalism is but another level of group loyalty.

Xenocentrism: This word means a preference for the foreign. It is exact opposite of ethnocentrism. It is the belief that our own products, styles, or ideas are necessarily inferior to those which originate else-where. For example, there are many occasions when people seem happy to pay more for imported goods on the assumption that anything from abroad is better.

Cultural relativism: Cultural relativism refers to the view that the values, ideas and behaviour patterns of a people are not to be evaluated and judged in terms of our own values and ideas but must be understood and appreciated in their cultural context. For example, premarital pregnancy is bad in our society, where the mores do not approve it and where there are no entirely comfortable arrangements for the care of illegitimate children. Premarital pregnancy is good in a society such as that of the Bontocs of the Philippines, who consider a woman more marriageable when her fertility has been established and who have a set of customs and values which make a secure place for the children. Similarly, adolescent girls in the United States are advised that they will improve their marital bargaining power by avoiding pregnancy until marriage, while adolescent girls in New Guinea are given the opposite advice, and in each setting the advice is probably correct.

Subculture: The culture of an identifiable segment of a society. A sub-culture is part of the total culture of society but it differs from the larger culture in certain respects—for example, in language, customs, values, or social norms. It is agreed that ethnic groups have subcultures, but writers also refer to the subcultures of occupations, adolescents, criminals, social classes, etc.

Contraculture: A subculture that stands in opposition to important aspects of the dominant culture of the society. The term was introduced by **J. Milton Yinger** to designate a particular type of subculture, in which certain values and social norms of the dominant culture are specifically rejected, and contrary values and norms deliberately accepted. In fact, the value and normative system of the contraculture can really be understood only in terms of its theme of opposition to the dominant culture. However, it should be remembered that a contraculture rejects some, but not all, of the norms of the dominant culture. For example, delinquency and drug addiction often have a contracultural aspect. The terms contraculture and counterculture are often used interchangeably in sociological literature.

Culture lag: This concept was introduced by **William F. Ogburn**, who applied it especially to modern industrial societies in which the material culture, through rapid advances in technology and science, has developed at a much faster rate than that part of the non-material culture (ideas, values, norms, etc.) which regulates man's adjustment to the material culture. Cultural lag as a concept and theory was developed by Ogburn as part of a wider theory of technological evolutionism. It suggests that there is a gap between the technical development of a society and its moral and legal institutions. The failure of the latter to keep pace with the former in certain societies, is cited as the basic factor to explain (at least some) social conflict and problems.

MODERNITY & SOCIAL CHANGES IN EUROPE & EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is a scientific attempt to study society. The origin of sociology dates back to early 19th & late 18th century. Reasons can be understood by looking into conditions in which sociology emerged. It emerged in Western & Central Europe.

Factors responsible for rise of sociology

1. Europe was undergoing a process of transformation, i.e. modernization. These changes created a situation of hope & despair- hope of a new era of progress but creating despair & disharmony. Sociology emerged as an attempt to understand these changes.
2. With the growth of science such beliefs like god created world were collapsed. The new world was being created by human enterprise. To make sense of this newly emerging world, sociology emerged as a discipline.
3. Problems of emerging capitalist society created the need for the rise of this discipline.
4. Intellectual developments alongside the socio-economic changes provided the means for the development of sociology. Confluence of social & intellectual conditions produced sociology.

Changes that were taking place

1. Traditional society of medieval Europe was referred to as dark ages. It was a feudal society. It emerged around 7th-8th century A.D, after collapse of Roman Empire. Various warriors conquered territories & they were parceled to their follower in view of loyalty & in return of land they rendered service. They worked on lord's estate & rendered military service when called upon. It was a subsistence agrarian economy. Primary objective was to satisfy needs of those dependent on it.
2. Politically, It was decentralized system. Feudal lord enjoyed all powers in estate i.e. was autonomous & the biggest feudal lord was king who addressed to residuary matters.
3. Socially, It was a rigidly stratified society in form of estates. Each estate was governed by its own laws. The produce was very little for trade. Neither was there enough trade nor were the conditions fertile for trade.

By the start of 14th century, this system was on decline because of:

1. **International Contradictions:** Decentralization resulted in feuds among feudal lords e.g. England witnessed 100 years war. These feuds were detrimental to trade as the Victorious army plundered merchants. In order to win these feuds they started having permanent soldiers to have an efficient army and so, they had to be paid in cash. Earlier it wasn't so. With cash, bought things from market & market economy started declining.
2. **Black Death:** Plague broke out & half of the population died. Feudal lords had to entice people from outside to work on their land by offering cash.
3. **Trade route to east discovered by Marco Polo:** Knowledge of new technology from China had reached England –mariner's compass, gunpowder, knowledge of printing & paper. And this facilitated ship building activity & weaving, leading to discovery of America. Gold & silver was discovered in Latin America. European markets were

flooded with goods. It led to centralisation of authority & establishment of absolute monarchy. It was encouraged by merchant class so that effective law & order could be established. Growing trade led to increased interaction in new languages. These communities governed by single ruler gave rise to sovereign north states. These wealthy merchants looked to reinvest surplus profits & they did so in land, & they used it for sheep rearing & scientific farming. They would take away common lands of the village → **Enclosure movement** in Europe. *It led to capitalist agrarian economy.*

Capitalism is system of production which is essentially geared towards creation of profit. There was expansion of banking companies to provide credit facilities to merchants, making it easy for them to run business. It uprooted large number of small farmers. Tradition of village community had its own equilibrium of artisan & peasants. When peasants got uprooted, artisans also left. Some migrated to nearby cities and others to Americas to have stable life in new land. Growth of trade led to transformation of rural economy.



The Factory system of production significantly changed social relations

These migrant poor peasants & artisans became cheap labour as they were at mercy of their employers. Merchants started looking for new means for investing wealth. They would buy lot of raw material & give it to the workers to work upon → **Putting Out System** (Early form of factory system)

With emergence of steam engine textile factories were set up → **Factory System** developed. They were made to work for long hours with low wages. This forced women & children to work in extremely unhygienic conditions which led to diseases like tuberculosis.

As trade & commerce expanded, new kind of business organisations like regulated companies, joint stock companies and chartered companies, came up. Though it *created unprecedented wealth & prosperity for land owner & merchants it also created unprecedented*

poverty for the majority. So, social differences increased. There was no community support in cities. There was increase in crime & violence. There were class wars & uprisings. So 19th century is called **Century of Revolutions**. Benefits accrued to only a small section of population. As the capitalist system developed, the *locus of economic power shifted from land & landholder*, who also enjoyed political power-to the bourgeoisie (wealthy merchants).

They also wanted political power to further promote their interest. Earlier they supported rise of absolute monarchy and now, they wanted to change it from the notion of subject to citizens who have inalienable rights which cannot be taken away by the kings. They started questioning the authority of king. *Divine right theory came to be challenged*.

There was a **confrontation between the rising bourgeoisie & the monarchy**. Monarchy was supported by church as church legitimized the ancient regime. Various philosophers vocalized the idea of bourgeoisie. *French revolution triggered the process of destruction of monarchy in Europe* as the rise of Napoleon resulted in defeat of divinely ordained kings. Prestige of monarchy in England came down. In England, democracy emerged gradually but it was not so all over Europe. Like Napoleon himself declared himself as emperor and a new dynasty was established once again. The same was overthrown and again a new dynasty was established by his nephew & again it was overthrown. So there were continuous political upheavals.

Simultaneously, there was a massive growth of urban centers. The *new problems which emerged could not be resolved by customary methods*. So people were looking for methods to resolve them as this raised confidence in *-Human problems can be solved by human endeavour*". So, *social conditions in wake of rising industrial society created a need for new knowledge for the emergence of better society*.

New thinking emerged which led to reformation and it led to enlightenment. It can be traced back to **renaissance** meaning rebirth i.e. revival of ideas of ancient Greece. It reached Italy & then other parts of Western Europe. These ideas were appealing to rising merchant class unlike catholic belief that man is born because of sin. New thinking said man is the finest creation of god. Christian belief said truth is acquired by gifted individuals → prophets. **Renaissance said truth is acquired through experience**. God is not the creator of world but god is experienced in laws of nature. To glorify god, discover laws of nature. Experience developed into experimentation. Change in Christian belief as a protest against Roman Catholic Church. Protestants wanted no priest between man & God. Man has been given a life for purpose i.e. to demonstrate glory of God by unraveling the mysteries of nature. Knowledge acquired by reasoning was to be used for human welfare. This technology was used for Industrial production. Faith developed in efficacy of science to help in solving human problems.

In late 17, 18, 19th century, thinkers were reflecting on these changes. They held certain ideas in common & are called as **enlightenment philosophers**. Their ideas are referred to as *philosophy of history* i.e. to inquire into the true nature of changes that were taking place.

Beliefs That Were Adopted By These Enlightened Philosophers

1. Man is progressing & this is taking human society towards perfection. Initial Christian belief was society will remain as it is.

2. They raised question whether changes occurred in random spurts or followed a regular pattern. They responded by presuming that changes take place in an orderly fashion. Laws governing them can be discovered. (Law represents a recurrent pattern in reality i.e. changes follow a regular fashion, so laws governing change can be discovered.)
3. They redefined notion of society as before political society of state was co-terminus with society as a whole. **New concept of civil society emerged.** (Earlier history was concerned only with kings & courtiers, later art, architecture, religion also became part of history writing). Society came to be considered larger than State & it was considered that parts of society are inter-related.
4. Laws were discovered to gain better control over physical world. In the same way, if we apply reason & research, then, we can discover laws about society as well i.e. if scientific method is used to discover society, we can develop laws, and rules which can be used for creating perfect human society.
5. There emerged a consensus that human society is also amenable to observation & laws governing it can be discovered. Some of the enlightenment thinkers said that not only rational but perfect human society can be developed, as said by Marx, through revolution.
6. There was also an opposing current of thought: conservative reaction particularly by Roman Catholic Church. Louis de Bonald and Joseph De Maistre- French conservative thinkers condemned the changes.

French society witnessed greatest convulsions in the course of this century. Political instability & economic disparities were highest. Almost every family lost one able bodied person in civil war or Napoleon wars. So thinkers prayed for stability & order. French thinkers described these changes as *society in decay*. They created awareness for need of stability & harmony. **The conservative reaction provided goals for sociology → Peace, harmony & order.**

Later day thinkers strived for order in industrial society – in order to do so, they adopted enlightenment ideas. It is possible to discover the laws governing society through scientific method and make use of these laws to create harmonious society.

So, means for creation of society were enlightenment & growth in natural sciences. Enlightenment glorified science: *science is panacea to all human problems*. **August Comte said “To know is to predict, to predict is to control.”** It reflects the above logic. **So, social & intellectual conditions together gave birth to sociology.**

Circumstances of origin shaped its characteristics. Sociology, particularly in France, in the beginning was considered similar to physics and biology. August Comte called it social physics.

Influences Affecting Emergence of Sociology

1. A scientific Approach to the study of society dates back to the tradition of the Enlightenment.
2. They upheld reason as a measure to judge social institutions and their suitability for human nature.
3. Human beings are capable of attaining perfection.
Apart from these, other intellectual influences owing in the post-Enlightenment period influenced the emergence of sociology in Europe. They can be identified as:

- 1) The philosophy of history.
- 2) The biological theories of evolution; and
- 3) The Surveys of social conditions.

The basic assumption of this philosophy was that society must have progressed through a series of steps from a simple to complex stage. The contributions of the philosophy of history to sociology as having been:

On the philosophical side: the notions of development and progress.

On the scientific side: it has given the concepts of historical periods and social types.

The social thinkers, who developed the philosophy of history such as, Abbe Saint Pierre and Giambattista, were concerned with the whole of society and not merely the political, or the economic, or the cultural aspects.

Sociology moved towards an evolutionary approach, seeking to identify and account for the principal stages in social evolution.

1. The growing conviction that the methods of the natural sciences should and could be extended to the study of human affair; that human phenomenon could be classified and measured.
2. The concern with poverty, following the recognition that poverty was not natural but social. The basic assumption which underlines this method is that, through the knowledge of the social conditions one can arrive at solutions to solve the social problems found in society.
3. The background to the new approach was the series of sweeping changes associated with the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.
4. The shattering of traditional ways of life prompted them to develop a new understanding of both the social and the natural worlds, just as natural scientists sought to explain the mysteries of life and nature.

To begin with the very beginning we shall start with **August Comte (1798-1857)** commonly regarded as the founder of Sociology. It was he who coined the name sociology'. Comte was born in 1798 during the ferment of the French revolution, that vast complex of events, which heralded the birth of the modern world.

August Comte (1798-1857)

A French sociologist was born at Montpellier France to Catholic royalist parents. In 1814 he was admitted to one of the most prestigious educational institutions of France at that time, called the Ecole Polytechnique. Here most of the professors were scholars in mathematics and physics.

At the Ecole Polytechnique, he came under the influence of such traditionalist social philosophers as **L. G Bonald and Joseph de Maistre**. It was from them that he borrowed the notion of an order governing the evolution of human society. From Condorcet, another major Philosopher of France, who was beheaded later, he got the idea that this evolution occurs along with progress in human societies. In 1824, he became a secretary to Saint-Simon an aristocrat by birth but a utopian socialist in ideas. Comte's major ambition was the political reorganization of human society.

According to him such reorganization will have to depend upon the spiritual and moral unification of society.



August Comte is considered as the father of modern sociology

In the book “**Cours de philosophie positive**” he wrote the law of three stages and developed his conception of a science of society. While working on this book, he discovered the principle of cerebral hygiene. This meant that in order to keep his mind uncontaminated he stopped reading other peoples works.

August Comte lived in the aftermath of the **French Revolution**. His fundamental and lifelong preoccupation was how to replace disorder by order; how to bring about a total reconstruction of society. He saw the French Revolution as a crucial turning-point in the history of human affairs.

Saint-Simon was a French aristocrat; he believed that the problems of his society could be best solved by reorganizing economic production. Saint-Simon and Comte wrote about the law of three stages through which each branch of knowledge must pass through. They said that *the object of social physics, the positive science of society later renamed as ‘sociology’ is to discover the natural and immutable laws of progress.*

According to Comte, sociology is the abstract theoretical science of social phenomena. He had initially called it Social Physics but later he reluctantly changed this name. He changed it because he found that a Belgian scientist, Adolph Quetelet, had used this term to describe simple statistics. Thus, Comte was compelled to use the **word sociology**, a combination of a Latin and a Greek word which denotes “**the study of society on a highly generalized or abstract level**”.

Comte was not only talking about **sociology** as a science of society, but also believed that it *must be used for reorganizing society*. He wanted to develop a *naturalistic science of society*. This science would be able to both explain the past development of mankind as well as predict its future course.

Comte also maintained that the *new science of society must rely on reasoning and observation instead of depending on the authority of tradition*. Every scientific theory must also be based on observed facts and vice versa. Comte also *introduced the historical method*.

Historical method:-

1. A healthy advance in sociology.
2. Compares societies throughout the time in which they have evolved.
3. This method is at the core of sociological inquiry since historical evolution is the very crux of sociology.

According to Comte nothing is absolute. Every knowledge is true in a relative sense and does not enjoy everlasting validity. Thus, science has a self-corrective character and whatever does not hold true is rejected.

The term, **Positive Science** (To highlight this new mode of thinking), was used by August Comte. Initially he called it positive philosophy. But distinguished it from earlier philosophical thinking in that earlier philosophical thinking said how things ought to be. It means you are negating the way things actually are.

Observation is used to arrive at pattern of generalization. Positive science means that starting knowledge through observation & through repeated observation, discover a pattern & then help in prediction of future.

Conclusion

In order to appreciate fully the emphasis of a sociological perspective, it is important to realize that Sociology as a discipline arose within distinct historical, intellectual and social contexts, and that it is the product of a particular era in particular societies.

Major questions about the individual and society have preoccupied thinkers in all periods of history: The philosophers of Ancient Greece and Rome reflected upon the way society operated and/or should operate, and for centuries afterwards social and political theorists and philosophers applied themselves to similar questions.

But these 'philosophical' analyses of society were essentially based on speculation, on dubious and untested assumptions about the motives of human beings in their behaviour, and on undisciplined theorizing. And they lacked systematic analysis of the structure and workings of societies. Philosophers and thinkers frequently constructed grand models and schemes about humans and their societies without looking at how societies actually worked.

However, from the eighteenth century onwards in Western Europe, important changes took place in perspectives on understanding of society and the individual's place in it. Many considerable advances were taking place in scientific discovery with regard to the structure and composition of the physical world surrounding human beings themselves.

The natural sciences, though essentially in their infancy, were beginning to develop systematic methods for studying the physical world and the individual's certain knowledge. Could such scientific, rational approach also be applied to the

analysis of human social worlds, their relationships, experiences and behaviour within it?

What Precipitated The Emergence Of Sociology?

1. Alongside these developments there were also extensive social, economic and political changes that had and were to have profound effects on societies in Western Europe and elsewhere.
2. Scientific and technological advances laid the foundations for the transformation from a predominantly rural, agricultural manual way of life to an urban, industrial, mechanized pattern of living.
3. New inventions and developments in methods of production, transport, etc. changed the scale and location of production and work, from the land and small enterprise to the town and city and large-scale enterprises like factories.
4. A greater variety of occupations emerged.

These extensive changes were integral to the process of industrialization involved. Moreover, a **major paradox** was that *they brought a new society with great productive potential and more sophisticated and complex ways of living, while at the same time generating extensive disruptions in traditional patterns of life and relationships as well as creating new problems of overcrowded and unpleasant urban conditions, poverty and unemployment.*

Sociology as a distinct discipline **emerged against the background of these intellectual and material changes in the second half of the nineteenth century.** The early sociologists were greatly influenced by the changes in a pattern of life which they saw going on around them as industrialization proceeded, and they were often deeply disturbed by what they saw. It is important to stress at this point that these early sociologists were not intensely radical individuals, but rather could frequently be more accurately labeled as 'conservatives' made uneasy by the changes they were observing in the society.

Nevertheless, they were greatly concerned with the idea of obtaining exact knowledge of the workings of society. Thus, from the very beginning, there was a great emphasis on the need to analyse social life scientifically. August Comte, the so called founder of Sociology, who stressed the adoption of a scientific method of analyzing society so that we might improve society through a thorough understanding of it, summed up in his famous phrase **'To know, to predict, to control'**.

This early emphasis on the scientific analysis of social life was to have (and still has) considerable implications for the subsequent development of the discipline.

Although we have located the beginnings of Sociology in Western Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, its development and acceptance as an academic discipline was not uniform and in Britain, British universities for a long time were relatively much more interested in the anthropological investigation of so called primitive societies in the more remote area of the world, and British Sociology constituted a relatively minor discipline, centered mainly on the London School of Economics.

The early classical works in Sociology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were produced in France and Germany, with Emile Durkheim in France and Karl

Marx and Max Weber in Germany as the outstanding figures. The work of these classical sociologists still occupies a position of profound importance in contemporary theoretical debates. Sociology developed markedly till early in this century. And the ideal sociological material was a rapidly expanding and industrializing, cosmopolitan, immigrant-based society that was experiencing a wide range of social changes.

Sociology in the USA was, therefore, understandably characterized by detailed empirical studies of a variety of area (particularly the more seamy sides) of American social life of delinquent gangs and neighborhoods, of particular ethnic minorities etc. – though other works, led by Talcott Parsons, involved theorizing in the traditional manner.

As an established discipline, however, Sociology is a relatively new arrival on the academic scene, and the real expansion in its popularity has occurred in the post-War period. We can point to some factors that have influenced this expansion:-

1. In the Post-war period there has developed *a rather more critical awareness of how societies operate*: fewer people simply back it and accept their societies unthinking. They see that alongside the many technological and social advances that have been made there still exist problem areas like overpopulation, poverty & crime.
2. Alongside this, there has developed an *increasing concern with social reform and the reordering of society*, accompanied by the belief that in order to make such reforms effective and soundly based, knowledge about society and its members is needed.
3. There has also *developed an increasing awareness of other societies & ways of life*, because of better systems of communications in travel and the mass media.
4. Increasingly, it has been claimed the people who work in government, industry, the social services etc. ought to have some sort of specialist knowledge of society on the ground that they will be better equipped to meet the demands of their work.
5. *Emergence of New nation states undergoing rapid modernization*. Therefore increasing awareness among these societies, of the need to understand social life scientifically in order to ease the process of nation building.

As result, during and since the 1960's, Sociology degree courses have increased considerably, Sociology has found its way into schools, sociologist have been increasingly recognized and consulted by various organizations, from national government downwards, in research programmes, policy, planning etc. and some sociologist have also found fame in the national media.

Background For The Emergence Of Sociology

Plato studied society in the systematic way for the first time and he considered man as a social animal and talked about ordered society. But sociology as a separate discipline arose in turbulent times of socio-economic and political upheavals in Europe preceded by renaissance. Intellectual thought got redeemed once again during this period.

Renaissance was the period of new discoveries and inventions. Mythological thinking got transformed into a rational thinking. All these scientific achievements were accompanied by spectacular rise in trade and commerce and internalization of modern technology is the

production processes. Various groups of thinkers, intellectuals talked about the inevitability of progress.



Ancient Greek Philosophers Discussed and Debated Several Social Issues

The intellectual revolution of renaissance was accompanied by changes in the eco- political organization manifested by Industrial and French Revolution.

Industrial revolution was the epochal event which represented the changing economic conditions followed by several social changes. It had some political implications as feudalistic set-up started crumbling with the rise of commercial and industrial revolution. Industrial revolution changed the existing system by:

- 1) Liberation of labor from land
- 2) Rapid urbanization accompanying industrialization
- 3) Development of new, innovative technology
- 4) Expansion of markets and trade due to increased production and need for raw materials. This eventually led to colonialism.
- 5) Erosion of authority of religious institutions.
- 6) Changed family structure and organization. Extended families got converted into nucleus families.

All these transformations led to some new problems which were unknown before:--

- 1) Development of slums in new habituated areas thus living conditions got bad. (Cities became Repositories of History)
- 2) Working conditions were inhuman
- 3) Emergence of absolute poverty
- 4) Rise in crimes
- 5) Widespread structural changes happened where relations got contractual.
- 6) Property divided into 2 major Classes

The result was a total social disorder and intellectuals were compelled to think about restoring social order and to study the changes which occurred. The conditions were ripe for development of sociology (a new discipline) as all existing disciplines were considered incapable of dealing or analyzing these changes in society.

The changes which occurred as the result of modernity and revolutions enlarged their scope as the initial economic changes and later gave way to political changes. These changes in the political system were manifested in the form of French Revolution.

- 1) Death of feudalism led to the dawn of democracy and ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.
- 2) French Revolution was followed by turmoil in the society leading to the social disorder.

The turbulent conditions in France compelled the intellectuals to develop a scientific discipline which could predict changes and restore social order. Thus sociology was one of the intellectual products of French Revolution. These economic and political revolutions led to intellectual changes which proved to be the bedrock for sociology. Thinkers gave sociology its methodology (survey), perspectives (evolution) and source (Historical data) to study society and rational understanding of the society became the slogan of the day. The sociology was thus the intellectual product of the modernism and the industrial and French Revolutions. The economic and political revolutions provided the need and intellectuals provided the base for the emergence of sociology and it got its birth in 1838 with August Comte finally conceiving it.

SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY

Every science has its own areas of study or fields of inquiry. It becomes difficult for anyone to study a science systematically unless its boundaries are demarcated and scope determined precisely. Unfortunately, there is no consensus on the part of sociologists with regard to the scope of sociology. V.F. Calberton comments, since sociology is so elastic a science, it is difficult to determine just where its boundaries begin and end, where sociology becomes social psychology and where social psychology becomes sociology, or where economic theory becomes sociological doctrine or biological theory becomes sociological theory something, which is impossible to decide. However, there are two main schools of thought regarding the scope of sociology: (1) The specialistic or formalistic school and (2) the synthetic school.

(1) The Specialistic or Formalistic School

This school of thought is led by the German sociologist George Simmel. The other main advocates of this school are Vierkandt, Max Weber, Small, Von Wiese and Tonnies.

Simmel and others are of the opinion that sociology is a pure and an independent science. As a pure science it has a limited scope. Sociology should confine itself to the study of certain aspects of human relationship only. Further, it should study only the 'forms' of social relationships but not their contents. Social relationship such as competition, sub-ordination, division of labour etc., are expressed in different fields of social life such as economic, political, religious, moral, artistic etc. Sociology should disentangle the forms of social relationships and study them in abstraction. Sociology as a specific social science describes, classifies and analyses the forms of social relationships.

Vierkandt says that sociology concerns itself with the ultimate form of mental or psychic relationship which links men to one another in society. He maintains that in dealing with culture, sociology should not concern itself with the actual contents of cultural evolution but it should confine itself to only the discovery of the fundamental forces of change and persistence. It should refrain itself from making a historical study of concrete societies.

Max Weber opines that the aim of sociology is to interpret or understand social behaviour. But social behaviour does not cover the whole field of human relations. He further says that sociology should make an analysis and classification of types of social relationships. Small insisted that sociology has only a limited field. Von Wiese and Tonnies expressed more or less the same opinion.

Criticism : Views of the Formalistic School are widely criticised. Some critical remarks may be cited here:

Firstly, the formalistic school has unreasonably narrowed the field of sociology. Sociology should study not only the general forms of social relationships but also their concrete contents.

Secondly, the distinction between the forms of social relations and their contents is not workable. Social forms cannot be abstracted from the content at all, since social forms keep on changing when the contents change. Sorokin writes, we may fill a glass with wine, water or sugar without changing its form, but I cannot conceive of a social institution whose form would not change when its members change .

Thirdly, sociology is not the only science that studies the forms of social relationships. Other sciences also do that. The study of international law, for example, includes social relations like

conflict, war, opposition, agreement, contract etc. Political Science, Economics also study social relationships.

Finally, the establishment of pure sociology is impractical. No sociologist has been able to develop a pure sociology so far. No science can be studied in complete isolation from the other sciences. In fact, today more emphasis is laid on inter-disciplinary approach.

2. The Synthetic School

The synthetic school of thought conceives of sociology as a synthesis of the social sciences. It wants to make sociology a general social science and not a pure or special social science. In fact, this school has made sociology synoptic or encyclopaedic in character. Durkheim, Hob House, Ginsberg and Sorokin have been the chief exponents of this school.

The main argument of this school is that all parts of social life are intimately inter-related. Hence the study of one aspect is not sufficient to understand the entire phenomenon. Hence sociology should study social life as a whole. This opinion has contributed to the creation of a general and systematic sociology.

The Views of Emile Durkheim

Durkheim, one of the stalwarts of this school of thought, says that sociology has three main divisions or fields of inquiry. They are as follows: Social Morphology, Social Physiology and General Sociology.

(i) Social Morphology: Social morphology studies the territorial basis of the life of people and also the problems of population such as volume and density, local distribution etc.

(ii) Social Physiology : Social physiology has different branches such as sociology of religion, of morals, of law, of economic life and of language etc.

(iii) General Sociology : General Sociology can be regarded as the philosophical part of sociology. It deals with the general character of the social facts. Its function is the formulation of general social laws.

The Views of Morris Ginsberg

Ginsberg, another advocate of the synthetic school, says that the main task of sociology can be categorised into four branches:

(i) Social Morphology : Social Morphology deals with the quantity and quality of population.

It studies the social structure, social groups and institutions.

(ii) Social Control : 'Social Control studies-formal as well as informal-means of social control such as custom, tradition, morals, religion, convention, and also law, court, legislation etc. It deals with the regulating agencies of society.

(iii) Social Processes : 'Social processes' tries to make a study of different modes of interaction such as cooperation, competition, conflict, accommodation, assimilation, isolation, integration, differentiation, development, arrest and decay.

(iv) Social Pathology : 'Social Pathology' studies social mal-adjustment and disturbances. It also includes studies on various social problems like poverty, beggary, unemployment, over population, prostitution, crime etc.

Ginsberg has summed up the chief functions of sociology as follows:

(i) Sociology seeks to provide a classification of types and forms of social relationships.

(ii) It tries to determine the relation between different factors of social life. For example, the economic and political, the moral and the religious, the moral and the legal, the intellectual and the social elements.

(iii) It tries to disentangle the fundamental conditions of social change and persistence and to discover sociological principles governing social life.

The scope of sociology is, indeed, very vast. It studies all the social aspects of society such as social processes, social control, social change, social stratification, social system, social groups, social pathology etc. Actually, it is neither possible nor essential to delimit the scope of sociology, because, it would be, as Spratt puts it, A brave attempt to confine an enormous mass of slippery material into a relatively simple system of pigeonholes .

USES OF SOCIOLOGY

Of the various social sciences, sociology seems to be the youngest. It is gradually developing. Still it has made remarkable progress. Its uses are recognised widely today. In modern times, there is a growing realisation of the importance of the scientific study of social phenomena and the means of promoting what Prof Giddings calls human adequacy (human welfare).

The study of sociology has a great value especially in modern complex society. Some of the uses of sociology are as follows:

(i) Sociology studies society in a scientific way. Before the emergence of sociology, there was no systematic and scientific attempt to study human society with all its complexities. Sociology has made it possible to study society in a scientific manner. This scientific knowledge about human society is needed in order to achieve progress in various fields.

(ii) Sociology throws more light on the social nature of man. Sociology delves deep into the social nature of man. It tells us why man is a social animal, why he lives in groups, communities and societies. It examines the relationship between individual and society, the impact of society on man and other matters.

(iii) Sociology improves our understanding of society and increases the power of social action. The science of society assists an individual to understand himself, his capacities, talents and limitations. It enables him to adjust himself to the environment. Knowledge of society, social groups, social institutions, associations, their functions etc., helps us to lead an effective social life.

(iv) The study of sociology helps us to know not only our society and men but also others, their motives, aspirations, status, occupations, traditions, customs, institutions, culture etc. In a huge industrialised society our experience is comparatively limited. We can hardly have a comprehensive knowledge of our society and rarely have an idea regarding other societies. But we must have some insight into an appreciation of the motives by which others live and the conditions under which they exist. Such an insight we derive from the study of sociology.

(v) The contribution of sociology is not less significant in enriching culture. Sociology has given training to us to have rational approach to questions concerning ourselves, our religion, customs, mores, institutions, values, ideologies, etc. It has made us to become more objective, rational, critical and dispassionate. The study of societies has made people to become more broad minded. It has impressed upon its students to overcome their prejudices, misconceptions, egoistic ambitions, and class and religious hatreds. It has made our life richer, fuller and meaningful.

(vi) Another aspect of the practical side of sociology is the study of great social institutions and the relations of individuals of each one of them. The home and family, the school and education, the state and government, industry and work, religion and morality, marriage and family, law and

legislation, property and government, etc. are some of the main institutions, through which our society functions. More than that, they condition our life in countless ways. Knowledge of sociology may help to strengthen them to serve man better.

(vii) Sociology is useful as a teaching subject too. Sociology is a profession in which technical competence brings its own rewards. Sociologists, especially those trained in research procedures, are in increasing demand in business, government, industry, city planning, race relations, social work, social welfare, supervision, advertising, communications, administration, and many other areas of community life. A few years ago, sociologists could only teach sociology in schools and colleges. But sociology has now become practical enough to be practised outside of academic halls. Careers apart from teaching are now possible in sociology. The various areas of applied sociology are coming more and more into prominence in local, state, national and international levels.

(viii) The need for the study of sociology is greater especially in underdeveloped countries. Sociologists have now drawn the attention of economists regarding the social factors that have contributed to the economic backwardness of a few countries. Economists have now realised the importance of sociological knowledge in analysing the economic affairs of a country.

(ix) The study of society is of paramount importance in solving social problems. The present world is beset with several social problems of great magnitude like poverty, beggary, unemployment, prostitution, over-population, family disorganisation, community disorganisation, racial problems, crime, juvenile delinquency, gambling, alcoholism, youth unrest, untouchability etc. A careful analysis of these problems is necessary in order to solve them. Sociology provides such an analysis.

(x) Sociological knowledge is necessary for understanding and planning of society. Social planning has been made easier by sociology. Sociology is often considered a vehicle of social reform and social reorganisation. It plays an important role in the reconstruction of society.

(xi) The practical utility of sociological techniques: The techniques developed by the sociologists and other social scientists are adopted by others. Let us think the example of social survey. Developed and used mainly by sociologists and statisticians, it has become an essential tool of market research and political polling. In the same way, sociologists provide a great deal of information that is helpful in making decisions on social policy.

(xii) Study of society has helped several governments to promote the welfare of the tribal people. Not only the civilised societies, but even the tribal societies are faced with several socio-economic and cultural problems. Studies conducted by sociologists and anthropologists regarding tribal societies and problems have helped many governments in undertaking various social welfare measures to promote the welfare of the tribal people. Efforts are now being made to treat the tribals on par with the rest of the civilised people.

(xiii) Sociology has drawn our attention to the intrinsic worth and dignity of man. Sociology has been greatly responsible in changing our attitudes towards fellow human beings. It has helped people to become catholic in outlook and broadminded in spirit. It has made people to become tolerant and patient towards others. It has minimized the mental distance and reduced the gap between different peoples and communities.

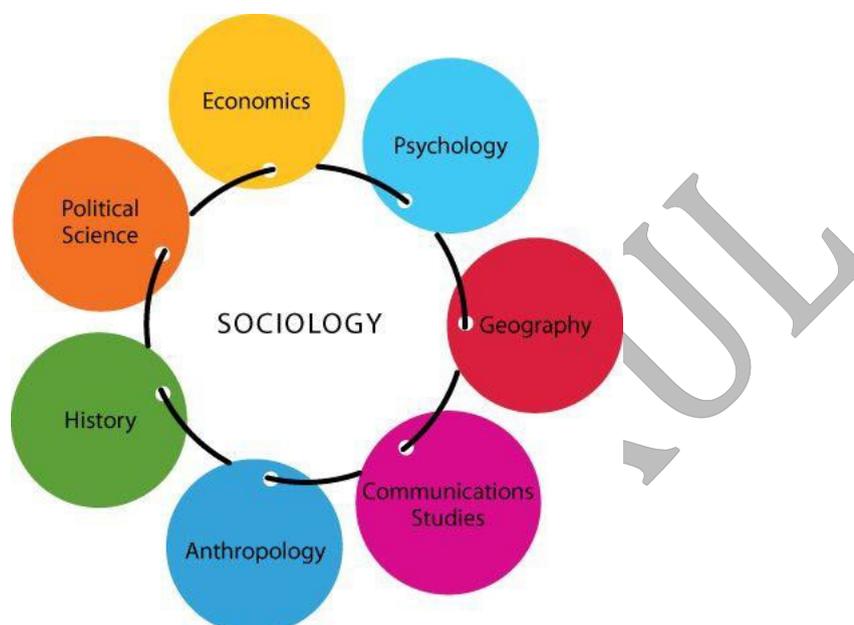
(xiv) Sociology is of great practical help in the sense, it keeps us up-to-date on modern social situations and developments. Sociology makes us to become more alert towards the changes and developments that take place around us. As a result, we come to know about our changed roles and expectations and responsibilities.

(xv) Finally, as Giddings has pointed out Sociology tells us how to become what we want to be.

In conclusion, it can be said that the question of value of sociology' is not a question whether or not we should study a subject. But it is a simple question of how it is actually to be used. Sociology, in short, has both individual and social advantages.

SOCILOGY IN RELATION WITH THE OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sociology, though it no longer claims to be the all-inclusive science of society, does claim to be synoptic. We have, therefore, to consider in somewhat more detail how it is or should be related to the other social sciences and to other disciplines concerned with the social life of man.



Sociology is related to various other social sciences

Relation with Political Science

Political science deals with social groups organized under the sovereignty of the state. This may also be studied as a social institution. The state is a structure within which other lesser societies such as the family, the commercial world or the university develop; but as a social group and as an institution, it is also the object of sociology.

From the historical viewpoint the affinity between sociology and political science is very close; for it was not until comparatively late that the distinction between politics and sociology was made. Before this the main works on social subjects such as Plato's Republic, the Politics of Aristotle, and other classical works of the East and West were meant to be complete treatises on political science. In accordance with our conception of sociology it would not be accurate to consider political science as a part of sociology; for it has special topics of its own such as the nature and systems of law, the methods of political representation, the sphere of the legislative power etc., with which no other science is concerned directly. But certain political questions such as the relation between law and freedom, or the nature of political allegiance, inasmuch as they are related with the whole of social life, may also fall within the scope of sociology. In short, the ground covered by sociology and political science is largely common, but their viewpoints are different; the former looks upon the state as a social institution or association; the latter as the supreme regulating power of the community and the source of political law.

Traditional political science has had three main aspects: descriptive (accounts of the formal organization of central and local government, and historical studies of the development of such organization); practical (the study of current problems of organization, procedure, etc.); and

philosophical (the mingling of descriptive and evaluative statements in what is called, in a broad sense, political theory). In most political science of this kind there has been little attempt at generalization beyond that which is involved in an elementary classification of the types of political regime, largely in terms of their formal characteristics.

The influence of sociology in the field of political studies has been to direct attention toward political behaviour as an element in a social system, rather than the formal aspects of political systems considered in isolation, and to encourage attempts at scientific generalization and explanation. This influence began to be felt at an early stage in the development of sociology, largely through the work of the Marxists, since in Marx's theory political institutions and behaviour are closely linked with the economic system and with social classes, and have to be analyzed in this general social context. It was Marxist thought which provoked, at the end of the nineteenth century, the political sociology of Michels, Max Weber and Pareto, and thus led directly to the modern studies of political parties, elites, voting behaviour, bureaucracy and political ideologies.

Another, quite different, sociological influence is to be seen in the development of behaviourism in American political science. This may be dated roughly from Charles Merriam's Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association in 1925, in which he said: 'Some day we may take another angle of approach than the formal . . . and begin to look at political behaviour. Thereafter, a behaviourist approach developed rapidly at the University of Chicago, and although it was aided in the 1930s by an influx of European scholars who brought their own sociological orientation, derived from Michels and Weber, it took quite a different direction from that in Europe, being largely unaffected by Marxist ideas and having as its principal aim the creation of a strictly 'scientific' (and to some extent, quantitative) discipline.'

In recent years the sociological influence upon political science has become even more marked. First, there has been a direct borrowing of explanatory schemes and models; for example, of functionalism, as in G. A. Almond and J. S. Coleman, *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, or of the idea of a 'social system,' as in David Easton's work, particularly *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. There has also been a renewal of Marxist sociological ideas, inspired on one side by the revolutions in developing countries, and on the other side by the new social movements which have emerged in the advanced industrial countries.

Studies of the political development of new nations, because of the nature of the problems which are raised, have brought together the work of political scientists and sociologists (and frequently of anthropologists as well). The forces at work, and the changes which take place, in a peasant society, in a society made up of tribal units, or in a society organized in a caste system, belong more to the sphere of knowledge of the sociologist and anthropologist than to that of most political scientists; and to study political processes in such societies requires extensive borrowing from these other disciplines.

Finally, there has been a continuation and extension of work in fields which I have already mentioned: on political parties and pressure groups, on the relation between class and politics, on elites, and on the processes of government and administration. A particular feature of these studies is that they are carried out increasingly on a comparative basis, with the aim of arriving at some general statements about political organizations and political action, at least within the limits of specific type of society (e.g. Western industrial society).

The orientation of theory and research in political science over the past decade has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish the subject from political sociology. The behaviourist approach which was characteristic of American political science has been severely criticized and in part abandoned, but other general schemes of thought have been adopted from sociology including those derived from Marxism and the objects of research are increasingly sociological in kind. Some differences perhaps remain. Political scientists still devote a good deal of attention to the formal structure of government, which sociologists sometimes unwisely neglect. Political theory is still seen by many as being closely associated with philosophical ideas and problems, but here the case of sociology is hardly different; though its philosophical connections have not, perhaps, been so fully recognized. In general, we may say that the trend in political science, unlike that in economics, has been toward a merger with sociology in many of the most significant fields of research.

The correlation between these two branches of the social sciences is such that Giddings once wrote: To teach the theory of the state to men who have not learned the first principles of sociology, is like teaching astronomy or thermodynamics to men who have not learned the Newtonian laws of motion.

Relation with Economics

Sometimes economics has been defined as the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life, but more properly, it is taken as the science of wealth in its three phases of production, distribution, and consumption. As the economic process develops in society, it influences and is influenced by the social life of man; the relation between these two sciences is very intimate. Moreover, many economists like Sombart, Max Weber, Oppenheimer, Pareto, and Schumpeter, interpreting economic change as an aspect of social change, held that the study of economics would be misleading and incomplete apart from its social setting an opinion that has gained considerable ground during the last few decades. Again, as the economic system is embedded in the social structure as a part of it, the study of the former cannot be undertaken but as a function of the latter; that is why a celebrated economist said that 'Economics must be the handmaid of sociology.'

At the other end, environmentalist writers like Marx or Veblen, by thinking that the social reality is in the last resort reducible to the interplay of economic or technical forces, tend to transform sociology into a part or aspect of economics. The popularity of this view in past years accounts much for the common tendency to confuse economics with sociology. This tendency was popularised by the fact that both subjects were concerned, to the exclusion of any other, with solving the vexed question of capital and labour.

In modern times, however, hardly any grounds remain for confusing the distinction between economics and sociology. The development of the social sciences has cleared up many doubts and smoothed out many differences. In particular cases, to define the limits of both sciences still remains a difficult task. But this need not trouble the social scientist because the overlapping of related sciences, far from being harmful, is in reality very useful for the development of human knowledge. As a matter of fact it has given rise to various specialized branches of sociology as Political Sociology, Economic Sociology, Psychosociology etc.

Alfred Marshall observed: No doubt if that existed Economics would gladly find shelter under its wing. But it does not exist; it shows no signs of coming into existence. There is no use in waiting idly for it; we must do what we can with our present resources.' Would this judgment still be true today? I

do not think so. Sociology exists; sociologists have both critically examined the limitations of economic theory and made contributions to the study of economic phenomena. On the other side, economists themselves seem to have become weary of the frequency with which the phrase 'other things being equal' recurs in economic analysis, and many of them have attempted to go beyond description (which forms a large part of most economic textbooks) or deduction from a small number of simple presuppositions about human behaviour.

The recent sociological criticisms and contributions can be grouped under several headings. There are, first, the critical studies which attempt to show that economics cannot be an entirely autonomous science. Such, for example, is the approach of A. L. Lowie in his book *Economics and Sociology* which examines the significance and limits of pure economics, and discovers two sociological principles which underlie the classical laws of the market; the 'economic man', and competition or mobility of the factors of production. Lowie goes on to suggest fruitful areas of co-operation between economics and sociology. A similar approach was formulated earlier by F. Simiand, in *La methode positive en science economique*. Simiand was a collaborator of Durkheim in the *Année Sociologique* and adopted a sociological approach to economic problems. His argument is that the 'first principles of economics are hypotheses which need to be tested, rather than being taken as the starting point for deductive reasoning leading to conclusions no more certain than the original hypotheses. The only way of testing the hypotheses, in Simiand's view, is by sociological enquiry. Max Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* is an attempt to bring some of the concepts of economic theory within the framework of general sociology. Work by Talcott Parsons and N. J. Smelser attempts to show economic theory as a part of general sociological theory.

We can distinguish, secondly, the numerous sociological studies which have directly concerned themselves with problems of economic theory. Simiand, in *Le salaire, l'évolution sociale et la monnaie*, examined empirically the relation between wage and price levels and advanced a sociological theory of wages. A more recent book in the same field is Barbara Wootton's *The Social Foundations of Wage Policy*, which first analyses the inadequacies of the classical economic theory of wages and then presents a sociological analysis of the determinants of wage and salary differentials, based upon the data for Britain. A very interesting later part of the book examines the actual procedures and arguments in wage negotiations in modern Britain. There are many similar sociological studies of different aspects of economic theory, perhaps the most interesting being those concerned with the theory of the firm. Here we have Thorstein Veblen's classical study, *The Theory of Business Enterprise* and many later studies of the business corporation, including A. A. Berle and G. C. Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, and J. K. Galbraith's book, *The New Industrial State*.

Thirdly, there are the sociological works concerned with the general features of economic systems. It is here that the sociological literature is most plentiful, and that sociologists have explored aspects of economic behaviour neglected or treated in a cursory fashion by economists. Among the general studies which treat economic systems as wholes, and which have been produced both by sociologists and by sociologically minded economists are Marx's *Capital*, much of the work of the German historical school, as for example W. Sombart's *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, and K. Bücher's *Die Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*, Max Weber's writings on capitalism, the work of J. A. Hobson, especially *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism and Imperialism: A Study*, and numerous writings of Henri See. There have been many recent studies in the same field, most of them concerned with the later development of capitalism: J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*; J. Strachey,

Contemporary Capitalism; J. K. Galbraith, *American Capitalism and The Affluent Society*; and Raymond Aron, *18 Lectures on Industrial Society*, are perhaps the principal examples. But there have also been a number of works on other types of economic system, including primitive types.

In addition to these general studies of economic systems, sociologists have contributed to the study of particular aspects of economic organization ; e.g. the property system, the division of labour and occupations, and industrial organization. Some of these contributions will be considered in a later chapter devoted to the economic institutions of society.

Sociology and economics, which were very closely related at their origins, e.g. in the work of Quesnay and Adam Smith, but which then diverged, except in the work of the German historical economists, have come closer together again in recent years. This has been due not only to the development of sociology and its direct contributions to economic studies, but also to changes within economics itself. There are two particular aspects of modern economics which should be mentioned in this connection. The first is the shift in interest from the market mechanism to the total national product and national income, which has led economists to an examination of the social factors influencing economic growth. This change of emphasis is apparent in much recent work on problems of economic development in underdeveloped regions, where the economist has either to collaborate with the sociologist or to become a sociologist himself. The second aspect is the application of the theory of games to economic phenomena.

This has led to more realistic studies of the behaviour of firms, and more importantly to the construction of models of one kind of social action which might be generalized to apply to a variety of types of action. If this were to be achieved it would mean that specifically economic, and more general sociological, problems would be capable of analysis in terms of a single conceptual scheme. In this way certain parts at any rate of economic and sociological theory might be unified. Such achievements are no doubt still far off, but there have already been some interesting attempts to use economic models in sociology, and on the other side to make use of sociological accounts of economic behaviour in economic theory, particularly in dealing with questions of economic growth.

Relation with Ethics

The relations existing between sociology and ethics must be deduced from the nature of both sciences. Ethics is concerned with the moral rightness or depravity of human actions. It investigates the laws of morality and formulates the principles and rules of morally desirable actions. It cannot be said that ethics is concerned with ends to the exclusion of means, because every human action is capable of morality, not only in itself as an end, but also in relation to other ends which it may subserve. A peaceful strike directed to improve the condition of the working classes, when all other legal means have proved futile, is morally good, or at least not wrong; whereas the same strike, used as a piece of revolutionary strategy, with the object of spreading unrest in the population, is ethically wrong.

There are some authors who, while acknowledging the distinction between sociality and morality, seem to imply that morality is exhausted in terms of sociality; or, in other words, that no ethical action is possible unless it is social. This view seems to be the product of a behaviouristic bias, for, setting aside the fact that many actions performed in society cannot be included directly in the category of what is moral or immoral, one must recognize that in many internal and private actions, which, as such, escape the definition of what is social, man is capable of morality. In the total configuration of a complex human action we shall usually find social as well as ethical elements intimately

interconnected; their reciprocal influence may be so intimate as to render the task of disentangling them extremely difficult. Yet, for all this, their value and meaning will be quite different. A situation like this demands for its solution the close co-operation of ethics and sociology.

The difference, therefore, between ethics and sociology has more than one reason for it. Firstly, their fields do not totally coincide, for not everything that is social is ethical; nor is everything that is ethical, social. Secondly, the viewpoint from which they may envisage the same problem is different. On the other hand, though the moral life of man is developed in society, the influence of ethical behaviour on social and political life can hardly be exaggerated. Imitating Fox's dictum, one may say; 'What is ethically wrong cannot be socially right.'

Relation with Anthropology

It is commonly held that the physical and cultural development of human beings, from their origin to the present time, is the object of the study of anthropology. For convenience of method such a vast field is divided into the following parts: human evolution or the study of the fossil man; physical anthropology which is concerned with the bodily characteristics of racial groups, their biological reactions and the influence on them of environmental factors; archaeology or prehistory which attempts to reconstruct the social life of prehistoric man. Cultural anthropology is the study of man's culture both material and immaterial, while social anthropology deals with man as a social being, in which sense it would coincide with sociology. But the fact that anthropologists are mostly concerned with preliterate man, and that the boundary of social anthropology especially in Britain used predominantly the structural-functional method distinguishes this discipline from sociology as such. There are other branches of anthropology such as linguistics which seeks to investigate the characteristics of the various cultural groups and their changes through the study of the languages of mankind both in the preliterate and historical periods.

According to its etymology, anthropology (from the Greek anthropos: man) should deal with man as such, whereas sociology should deal with him inasmuch as he is a social being. But in the concrete some restrictions are made for both concepts, and anthropology has also made its adjustments to the other social sciences. Thus cultural anthropology, to which sociology is more related, confines itself to the study of culture mostly among preliterate peoples.

Though the youngest of the traditional social sciences, it has developed and gone ahead of many of them; it has made outstanding contributions to the study of man. By its insistence on field research and on fact rather than on a priori speculations, it has rescued the social sciences, especially sociology, from their hazardous commitments to the theory of unilinear evolution, easily adhered to by early sociologists and anthropologists. Anthropologists like Westermarck, W. Schmidt, Malinowski, Boas, Goldenweiser, Paul Radin, Lowie, and others subjected the social sciences to the discipline of the anthropological fact by which it has been possible to make a new and safer start.

In our own days there is a tendency towards the union of cultural anthropology with sociology and some works on sociology have been written by anthropologists with dubious success. Yet, we believe, that the distinction between these two branches of the social sciences will continue to be observed as their points of view on the social reality are dissimilar and their fields of investigation do not always coincide.

Relation with Social anthropology

It is often said that although sociology and social anthropology had quite different origins (the one in the philosophy of history, political thought, and the social survey, the other in physical anthropology and ultimately in biology) they are now practically indistinguishable. This statement expresses an aspiration rather than a fact. If one examines the concepts, methods of investigation and analysis, and directions of interest of the two disciplines, it soon becomes apparent that they are still widely separated. Nevertheless, looking at the history of their relations, it can be seen that after an early period of close connection, where individual work could not easily be assigned to one or the other (e.g. Tylor, Spencer, Westermarck), there was a period of extreme divergence when the functional approach was generally adopted in anthropology while sociology (at least in the European countries) continued to be historically oriented and concerned with problems of social development ; and that finally, in recent years, there has been a new convergence of the two disciplines. The broad differences between sociology and social anthropology that emerged during the period of divergence can easily be related to differences in the object of study. Social anthropologists, once field work had become a fundamental requirement, were involved in studying small societies, of a very different character from their own societies, relatively unchanging, and lacking historical records. The methods followed from these facts; such societies could be observed as functioning wholes, they could be described and analyzed in ethically neutral terms since the anthropologist as an outsider was in no way involved in their values and strivings, and since they changed little and had no records of past changes, a historical approach was unnecessary and more or less impossible. This situation has now radically altered; many if not most primitive societies are changing under the influence of Western ideas and technology, larger groupings are beginning to predominate over tribal societies, and social and political movements are developing which involve the social anthropologist in the same kind of value problems which the sociologist has had to face in studying his own society, or societies of the same civilization's. In brief, we can see that the object of study now is societies in the process of economic growth and social change, and thus an object for both the sociologist and the social anthropologist, who work increasingly in Africa and Asia upon the same kinds of problems. It should be added that as primitive societies, regarded as the preserve of the social anthropologist, have more or less disappeared, so to some extent the special prerogatives of the sociologist in studying advanced societies have been challenged. There is an increasing number of anthropological studies in advanced societies; studies of the little community , of kinship groups, etc. Sociology and social anthropology are still divided by differences of terminology, approach and method (and the excursions into the other's territory are sometimes methodologically unsound) but there is both convergence and a desire to further it.

We should also note that, among contemporary societies, there is a third very important category of those which are neither primitive nor industrially advanced. In such societies, of which India may be taken as an example, the distinction between sociology and social anthropology has little meaning. Sociological research in India, whether it is concerned with the caste system, village communities, or the process of industrialization and its effects, is and should be carried out by sociologists and social anthropologists. There is a real opportunity in this case for the traditional division between these disciplines to be overcome. It is true that the present training of sociologists and anthropologists works against this, to some extent, since their training is usually obtained in one of the Western countries in which the division persists; but the growth of the social sciences in the developing countries, and the diminishing dependence upon foreign educational resources will give an opportunity for a real integration of the methods and concepts of the two disciplines in terms of the problems and research tasks relevant to these societies.

Relation with History

If sociology is not to become a purely formal science it has to draw on history no less than on anthropology. Like political science, sociology is becoming one of the most genuine fruits of history, to which it is intimately related, though the overstressing of this intimacy has led some writers as G. von Bulow to refuse to acknowledge sociology as a science distinct from history.

On the other hand, the distinction between both subjects was somewhat unduly magnified by some, as Troeltsch, who claimed that history dealt with particular historical occurrences, whereas sociology was concerned with general laws. Yet this distinction, though exaggerated, is not without some foundation, as the primary interest of the sociologist is the finding of the general laws of society and that of the historian the reconstruction of the order in which historical events have been taking place. But in reality the sociologist cannot dispense with social facts any more than the historian with historical laws.

A deeper distinction between these two sciences lies in the fact that history deals with human events in so far as they are correlated in time, while sociology studies them from the viewpoint of the social relationships involved. Thus while the historian describes the Napoleonic wars with all the circumstances accompanying them, a sociologist would study their impact on the lives of the people, the role that these wars had on the subsequent development of the nationalistic spirit in Europe and the part that convictions and propaganda played in arousing the spirits of patriots against the invader.

Still other differences, related to those mentioned above, exist between sociology and history. Thus while the historian may deal with the development of the family in different civilizations, the sociologists task is to investigate into the various forms of this institution; to trace the morphological similarity between them; to find their correlations so as to be able to formulate the laws of change and causality that intervene among those traits and institutions.

Sociology and history may overlap in one area, but diverge widely in another.

The first point is that the historian frequently provides the material which the sociologist uses. The comparative method often requires, and historical sociology always requires, data which only the historian can supply. It is true that the sociologist must sometimes be his own historian, amassing information which had not previously seemed worth collecting, but he cannot always be so as time does not allow.

But, secondly, the historian also uses sociology. Until recently it was perhaps from philosophy that the historian took his clues to important problems, as well as many of his concepts and general ideas; these are now drawn increasingly from sociology. Indeed, we can see that modern historiography and modern sociology have both been influenced, and in similar ways, by the philosophy of history. The latter established the conception of historical periods, and thus bequeathed to historiography theoretical ideas and concerns which were entirely absent from the work of the earlier narrative historians, the chroniclers and analysts. It bequeathed to modern sociology the notion of historical types of society, and thus the first elements of a classification of societies. In much contemporary historiography and sociology it seems to me that the same basic framework of reference, to types of society, is employed. In the historical field, the connection is most evident where economic and social history (especially the latter) are concerned. It is worthy of note, for instance, that the editors of one of the leading journals of social history, the *International Review of Social History*, defined the scope of

the review in its first number in the following terms: Social history is taken to mean the history of estates, classes, social groupings regardless of name, seen both as separate and as mutually dependent units. In only slightly different terms this could also define the scope of historical sociology. At the present time there is, in several countries, evidence of co-operation and even trespassing into each other's territory, by sociologists and social historians. In France, the review *Annales*, founded and edited for many years by the late Lucien Febvre, has for long been a meeting place for historians, sociologists and other social scientists; and the traditions represented by the work of Febvre, Marc Bloch and others are still influential. In England, much recent work indicates the convergence of sociology and social and economic history: for example, historians' accounts of the social structure of nineteenth century towns, or of the characteristics of the medieval peasantry or the eighteenth century nobility, and sociologists' studies of the social history of a variety of professions.

In what ways, then do historiography and sociology differ? It used to be said that the historian describes unique events, while the sociologist produces generalizations. This is not true. The work of any serious historian abounds in generalizations, while many sociologists have been concerned with describing and analysing unique events or sequences of events. Perhaps we should say that whereas the historian usually sets out to examine a particular sequence of events, the sociologist usually begins with a generalization which he proposes to test by the examination of a number of similar sequences of events. In short, the intention is different. But even this qualified distinction is not wholly true. It depends very much upon the kind of historiography (e.g. it is most true of diplomatic history) and the kind of sociology (where it is most true of comparative studies). Making a still weaker distinction, we might say with H. R. Trevor-Roper, that the historian is concerned with the interplay between personality and massive social forces, and that the sociologist is largely concerned with these social forces themselves.

The more the distinction is refined to take account of the actual work of historians and sociologists, the clearer it becomes that historiography and sociology cannot be radically separated. They deal with the same subject matter, men living in societies, sometimes from different points of view, sometimes from the same point of view. It is of the greatest importance for the development of the social sciences that the two subjects should be closely related, and that each should borrow extensively from the other, as they are increasingly inclined to do.

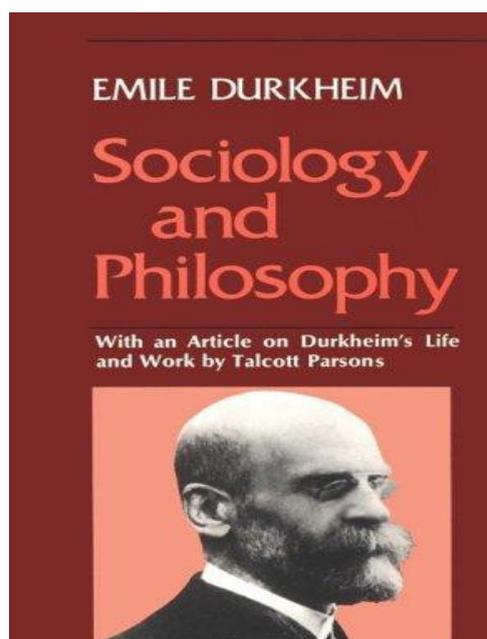
Relation with Philosophy

Sociology originated largely in a philosophical ambition ; to account for the course of human history, to explain the social crisis of the European nineteenth century, and to provide a social doctrine which would guide social policy. In its recent development sociology has for the most part abandoned such aims; and some would say that it has abandoned them too completely. However this may be, there remain connections between sociology and philosophy in at least three respects.

First, there can be, and is, a philosophy of sociology in the sense of philosophy of science; that is, an examination of the methods, concepts, and arguments used in sociology. And this philosophical scrutiny is more common and more needful in sociology than in, for example, the natural sciences, because of the peculiar difficulties experienced with sociological concepts and reasoning.

Secondly, there is a close relationship between sociology and moral and social philosophy. The subject matter of sociology is human social behaviour, which is directed by values as well as by impulses and interests. Thus the sociologist studies values and human valuations, as facts. But he

should also have some acquaintance with the discussion of values, in their own context, in moral and social philosophy. Still more important is it that the sociologist (and of course other social scientists) should be capable of distinguishing between questions of fact and value questions, and between the kinds of discussion and analysis appropriate to each. Yet it is frequently found, in the social sciences, that these distinct questions and kinds of discourse are confused ; value problems are claimed to be settled by assertions as to matters of fact, while the discussion of factual questions is often complicated or rendered sterile by the commitment of the discussants to particular values or general philosophical views. Only by some training in social philosophy can the sociologist become competent to distinguish the different issues, and at the same time to see their relationships to each other.



Durkheim's book titled Sociology and Philosophy

Thirdly, it may be held that sociology leads on directly to philosophical thought. This was, for instance, the view of Durkheim; in an essay on *Sociologie religieuse et throne de la connaissance*, he wrote I believe that sociology, more than any other science, has a contribution to make to the renewal of philosophical questions . . . sociological reflection is bound to prolong itself by a natural progress in the form of philosophical reflection. In Durkheim's own study of religion this prolongation can be seen in the transition from a discussion of the social influences upon the categories of thought, to epistemological discussion. Other sociologists have taken a similar view and have been concerned with similar problems. Karl Mannheim, for instance, thought that his sociology of knowledge had implications for epistemology, and indeed he stated the implications in detail. Both Durkheim and Mannheim seemed to claim that sociology can' make a direct contribution to philosophy, in the sense of settling philosophical questions. But this is an error; thus, epistemology is the basis of sociology of knowledge, not vice versa. All that is intended here is to suggest that sociology raises, to a greater extent than other social sciences, philosophical problems, and consequently that the sociologist who is at all concerned with the larger aspects of his subject is led on to consider philosophical issues which are always in the background of sociological reflection. It is not, in my view, at all harmful to sociological theory or research that the sociologist should interest himself in such problems and should seek to acquire a philosophical education which will equip him to deal with them, for much of

the weakness of sociological theory is due to philosophical naivete, and much of its triviality comes from disregard of the larger issues involved in any study of man.

In the same context it should be said that while sociology naturally leads on to philosophical reflection, much of it that is most important also begins there. The point which I made earlier about the value of the connection between political science and political philosophy applies over a wider field ; sociological research may easily become trivial if it ignores the larger problems of social life which are formulated in philosophical world views and in social doctrines. The vigour and the stimulating character of early Marxism in the field of social research was due in large measure to the fact that Marxism was not only a sociological theory but a philosophical world view and a revolutionary doctrine. To take another example, Beatrice Webb explained more than once how her social research had benefited from her active participation in a social movement and her commitment to a social doctrine. It has been, in my view, one of the strengths of much European sociology that it has conceived a science of society as being insufficient by itself, and as needing to be closely connected with a philosophy of society, from which it would begin its formulation of problems and to which it would return for the elucidation of new problems resulting from scientific investigation.

It should be apparent from this brief discussion of the relations between sociology and some other disciplines concerned with the social life of man, how vain it would be to conceive sociology as an all-embracing science, and how difficult it is even to conceive it as contributing a synoptic view of human society. The sociologist must accept his limitations. He can outline a broad conception of social structure by reference to which the special social sciences may direct their investigations towards the solution of important problems. He can draw attention to, and elucidate, relationships between social phenomena which specialization would ignore (e.g. between religious beliefs and economic behaviour, between social stratification and political events, between law and other forms of social control) By the use of the comparative and historical methods he can work towards the construction of a system of general laws. He can bring out the significance and problematic character of the connection between the individual as an organism and as a social being, which the other social sciences tend to ignore, and he can clarify the distinction and relation between the scientific and the philosophical study of values. All this is indispensable as a general framework for specialist studies, and it is increasingly appreciated by the specialists. But except for those who concern themselves entirely with the logical problems of general sociology, sociologists must themselves become specialists. The greater their competence in particular fields of enquiry in law, religion, economics, politics, etc. the greater will be the influence of the sociological approach and the profundity and accuracy of their own researches. The unity of the social sciences which now seems much closer as a result of increasing collaboration and cross-fertilization is best conceived as a unity of method and of conceptual schemes, not as a universal history.

Relation with Psychology

The problem of the relation between psychology and sociology, and of the status of social psychology in relation to both, is difficult and unsettled. There are two extreme views. J. S. Mill believed that a general social science could not be considered firmly established until its inductively established generalizations could be shown to be also logically deducible from the laws of mind. Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual man .1 Durkheim, on the other hand, made a radical distinction between the phenomena studied by psychology and sociology respectively. Sociology was to study social facts, defined as being external to individual minds and exercising a coercive action upon them ; the

explanation of social facts could only be in terms of other social facts, not in terms of psychological facts. 'Society is not a simple aggregate of individuals; the system formed by their association represents a specific reality possessing its own characteristics.. . In short, there is the same discontinuity between psychology and sociology as there is between biology and the physico-chemical sciences. Consequently, whenever a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon one can be sure the explanation is invalid. 2

The opposed views of Mill and Durkheim still have their partisans today, but most sociologists seem to have adopted various intermediate positions. Some, like Ginsberg, would hold that many sociological generalizations can be more firmly established by being related to general psychological laws, but that there may also be sociological laws *sui generis*. Similarly, S. F. Nadel argued that some problems posed by social enquiry might be 'illuminated by a move to lower levels of analysis psychology, physiology and biology'.

In spite of this wide recognition that sociological and psychological explanation may complement each other, the two disciplines are not, in practice, closely associated, and the place of social psychology, which ought to be especially close to sociology, is still disputed. It is easy to say that social psychology is that part of general psychology which has a particular relevance to social phenomena, or which deals with the psychological aspects of social life. In fact, all psychology may be considered 'social' in some degree, since all psychic phenomena occur in a social context which affects them to some extent; and it becomes difficult to mark out even roughly the boundaries of social psychology. This means that social psychologists have usually felt a closer association with general psychology than with sociology, have been bound to particular method (emphasizing experiment, quantitative studies, etc.) and have often ignored the structural features of the social milieu in which their investigations are conducted. This divergence between sociology and social psychology can be illustrated from many fields. In the study of conflict and war there have been mutually exclusive sociological and psychological explanations. In studies of social stratification, the psychological approach seems to have produced a particular account of class and status in subjective terms, which is contrasted with the sociological account in terms of objective factors, rather than systematic investigation of the psychological aspects of a significant element in the social structure. The psychology of politics hardly deserves to be mentioned, so remote does much of the writing appear to be from the most obvious facts of political structure and behaviour. In almost every field of enquiry it could be shown that psychology and sociology constitute for the most part two separate universes of discourse.

There have, of course, been many declarations in favour of closer association between the two disciplines, and, more usefully, a small number of attempts to bring them together. One of the most valuable is the work of Gerth and Mills. The authors say, 'The social psychologist attempts to describe and explain the conduct and motivations of men and women in various types of societies. He asks how the external conduct and inner life of one individual interplays with those of others. He seeks to describe the types of persons usually found in different types of societies, and then to explain them by tracing their inter-relations with their societies.' The field of study of social psychology is thus the interplay between individual character and social structure, and as Gerth and Mills say, it can be approached either from the side of biology or from the side of sociology. In the recent past the trouble has been that those coming from either side remained largely ignorant of what was being done on the other side, and were enclosed in their own world of academically approved terminology and method. Gerth and Mills attempt to bridge the gap by using the concept of 'role' as the key term both in their definition of the person and in their definition of institutions:

‘Social role represents the meeting point of the individual organism and the social structure, and it is used as the central concept in a scheme which makes possible an analysis of character and social structure in the same terms.’

This is quite similar to Fromm’s view which I mentioned above; and Gerth and Mills, like Fromm, take up again the fundamental problem of the relation between the individual and society, which was earlier examined by Ginsberg in an illuminating study dealing with the respective influence of instinct and reason in social life, with theories of the ‘group mind’, and with problems of public opinion and organized group behaviour. Later social psychology has for the most part abandoned this line of study in favour of statistical and experimental enquires which are far too much concerned with the individual or with simple aggregates of individuals; and it has therefore lost contact with sociology.

Finally, we should reconsider one objection to the possibility of a close association between sociology and psychology. Durkheim wished to exclude psychological explanation from sociology, though he often resorted to it implicitly. More recently, Radcliffe-Brown argued that sociology and psychology study two entirely different systems, one a social system, the other a mental system; and claimed that these two levels of explanation could not be combined. This seems an extreme view, and one unlikely to be sound at a time when much of the fruitful research even in natural science is taking place on the frontiers of different sciences. Yet we should acknowledge the genuine difficulties. Sociology and psychology do offer alternative accounts of behaviour, and if they are to be brought closer together it will be necessary to work out more rigorously than has yet been done (in studies of attitudes or of socialization) the conceptual and theoretical links between them.

Relation with Social Psychology

As society is fundamentally a mental phenomenon, the relation between social psychology and sociology becomes at once obvious. Social psychology deals with the mental processes of man considered as a social being. It studies particularly the influence of group life on the mental development of the individual; the effect of the individual mind on the group, and the development of the mental life of the groups within themselves and in their relations with one another. R. W. Pickford says more particularly that;

Social psychology analyses the framework of social relationships in such a way as to show the interaction of individuals and groups now and in the past, and by study of the dynamics of these interactions to reveal how they lead to the establishment of that framework and to the personality patterns of participant individuals.

Apart from the distinction between general psychology and social psychology, which some authors quite unjustly consider as purely academic, the relations between the latter subject and sociology, though intimate, leave plenty of room for distinction. If the whole of social life could be reduced finally to psychological forces, as McDougall and Freud seem to admit, the question between inheritance and environment, with which we have to deal, would definitely be decided in favour of the former and sociology would be reduced to a mere branch of psychology, namely, social psychology. But as the causes affecting social behaviour are likewise other than psychological, social life cannot be studied exclusively with the methods of the psychologist.

Economic, cultural, geographical or biological conditions are essentially different from psychological factors, though there is a close interaction among them; no can the development and variety of social institutions be explained exclusively on psychological grounds. The various forms of marriage and of the family among peoples having presumably the same psychological equipment, as well as existence of similar institutions like private property or monogamy among psychologically very different peoples, precludes once and for all a purely psychological explanation. The attempt to ascribe social causation to a single factor, though it may be as important as the psychological, is doomed to failure at the outset. In the interplay of forces influencing social change more than one such force is responsible for every single effect.

There seems to be, therefore, little doubt that the distinction between the motives influencing the agent and the causes accounting for the effect would go a long way towards the solution of the problem of social causation. But in any case the distinction between sociology and social psychology remains. The one studies society from the viewpoint of the community element; the other from the viewpoint of the psychological factors involved.

Moreover, if in the combination of sociological and psychological factors the stress is placed on the psychological, then we have social psychology, but if the sociological factors or approach are stressed, we shall have what is called psycho-sociology.

Other Social Sciences

The social sciences, which until two decades ago were very limited in number, now have considerably multiplied. So to those already mentioned we may add, demography, education, law, criminology, social service, and social statistics. But if various applications of sociology are considered, then the number increases indefinitely and will include, among others, industrial sociology, sociology of knowledge, religious sociology, organizational sociology, the sociology of communication and even futurology which deals with the society of the future. Indeed sociology has been called the fastest growing science.

Social Philosophy and The Social Sciences

Having studied the relation between sociology and the social sciences we must now deal with the relation that the social sciences and especially sociology have with social philosophy. This question has received a new impetus since the end whose achievement it was struggling.

Social philosophy, as the very name indicates, is the meeting point of sociology and philosophy, and may equally belong to both branches of knowledge. Its role in the social sciences is the study of the fundamental principles and concepts of social life in their epistemological and axiological aspects with a view to elaborate the higher syntheses of the social sciences and to define their place in the universe.

In accordance with this idea it consists of two parts: the epistemological and the axiological. The former is concerned with questions of knowledge; the latter with questions of value. In its epistemological aspect three functions can be considered which may be termed the ontological, criteriological, and synthetic. Through its ontological function social philosophy deals with the fundamental principles and concepts of social life such as man, society, justice, happiness, etc. In its criteriological function it criticizes or inquires into the validity of the presuppositions, principles, and

conclusions of the social sciences. In its synthetic function it seeks to bring together its results with those of the other sciences that deal with man. This synthesis belongs to an order higher than that implied in sociology itself. The sociological synthesis stays at the level of science; the socio-philosophical synthesis rises to the realm of philosophy where the ultimate harmony between all species of reality must be worked out.

In its axiological aspect social philosophy deals with the ultimate values of social life and the means of attaining them. Its object is, therefore, the attainment of the social good in itself and in its relations with ultimate moral values.

There is a way in which everybody admits that sociology or the social sciences must deal with values: namely, when they are considered as sociological data. Such would be, for instance, the study of the role played by the idea of duty or officium in the development of the Roman juridical institutions; or the influence of the concept of dharma in the making of Hindu institutions. Studies like these would belong, not to the field of axiology, but to the epistemological or scientific part of sociology or social philosophy. The concepts in question are ethical, but they are studied as objects of knowledge, not as sources of moral obligation. It is when we try to investigate into the validity or desirability of a line of behaviour, or its moral value, that wide disagreement arises between social scientists. It is the same kind of question that we faced when we discussed ethics in its relation to sociology.

It is true that the social sciences in general deal with means, but the question is whether there is any science that must deal with the validity of the ends to which these means are related. In practice we adopt the affirmative position and believe in the validity of the ends, after which we are striving: life, justice, freedom etc. To doubt or deny their validity, or to reduce the moral quality embodied in them to non-moral elements like force, custom etc., as many writers have done, is a dangerous position. It would reduce all the common aspirations of mankind, even the highest and most intimate, to a blind striving after Protean fancies and shadows. Such views, writes Prof. Ginsberg, 'would make the moral experience of mankind largely illusory and to me at least it seems highly improbable that the groping, but deeply-rooted, efforts of mankind towards fairness and equity in human relations have no rational foundation.

These situations and attitudes of mind frequently arise because neither is the philosopher well acquainted with the social sciences nor is the sociologist sufficiently grounded in philosophy. For as Vierkandt says: 'Sociology is productive only when it has a philosophical basis Otherwise it runs the risk of being reduced to a thing of shreds and patches', where facts and investigations are piled, but no final meaning is achieved. The social sciences may deal with means, but social philosophy, in its axiological aspect, while dealing with ends, cannot disregard the means, nor can the social sciences proceed as if the ends towards which they are addressed were invalid or doubtful. Social philosophy is bound to be the golden crown of the social sciences.

SOCIOLOGY AND COMMON SENSE

Common Sense is defined as routine knowledge that people have of their everyday world and activities. Common sense explanations are generally based on what may be called naturalistic and/or individualistic explanation based on taken for granted knowledge. Sociology has its tryst with common sense since long and it has been accused of being no more than common sense right from its birth.

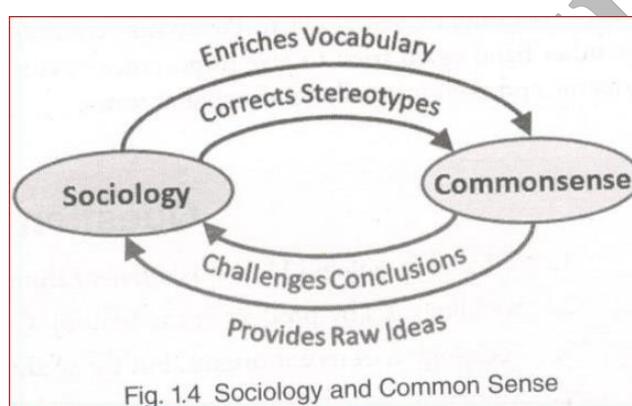


Common Sense is extremely important. Above diagram shows a person without common sense.

The problem is not that common sense knowledge is necessarily false, but that it is unexamined, unreflected and taken for granted. For this prime reason, Sociology is distinguished from common sense on various grounds -

- I. Common sense generally takes cues from what appears on surface, Sociology on the other hand looks for inter-connections and root causes which may not be apparent. A sociologist works like a skeptic, and Sociology as a science of organised skepticism, looking beyond what meets the eye. Explanations for religion and suicide by Durkheim are the best examples of such sociological outlook. While religion says God created man, Durkheim said Man created god/religion. According to Peter Berger The fascination of Sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see, in a new light, the very world in which we have lived our lives.
- II. Sociology uses reason and logic, common sense uses conjectures and stereotypical beliefs. Common sense views are often based upon images that get reinforced through tradition. Sociological knowledge, on the other hand, challenges these traditions and stereotypes. While traditional social role of woman is explained through explanations like biological factors, ritual sense, Sociology affords us a different view that such roles may have other basis like patriarchy. Further, Sociology is not bound by a single perspective.
- III. Common sense is based upon assumptions while Sociology is based upon evidences. Sociological knowledge is based upon thorough research and the resulting outcomes may be contrary to common sense.

- IV. Empirical testing has no place in common sense knowledge, while sociological research may have empirical orientation. Common sense knowledge is often individualistic and naturalistic.
- V. Sociological knowledge is objective, common sense is intuitive. Common sense knowledge on the same subject may not be coherent also. For example - Birds of a feather flock together and opposites attract are sayings which convey opposite meanings.
- VI. Sociological knowledge results into generalisation and even theory building. Common sense knowledge, on the other hand, may be very personal and two persons may draw different conclusion from the same event based on their own common sense.
- VII. Sociological knowledge is change oriented, while common sense promotes status quoism. VIII. Common sense is unreflective since it does not question its own origin, while sociological knowledge is subjected to unending debates and discourse.
- IX. Sociology has a body of concepts, methods and data, no matter how loosely coordinated, but common sense is more or less based on personal judgments.



Poverty, from commonsensical point of view, is viewed as a result of indolent behaviour, while a sociologist may view it in terms of structural inequalities and disabilities. Thus, like every star gazer is not an astronomer, every commonsensical observation about society is not a sociological observation. So, it is the way of looking at things which distinguishes Sociology and common sense. (fig. 1.4)

However, there are a few similarities and complementarities also between the two. Firstly, concepts in Sociology are framed by taking into consideration the commonsensical knowledge. Common sense helps sociologists in hypothesis building. Secondly, common sense provides raw material for sociological investigations. Sociology tends to answer questions generated from common sense knowledge. For example, common sense views on gender are widely studied in Sociology. Common sense also helps Sociology by challenging its conclusions and thereby enriching the discipline. According to Anthony Giddens, sometimes sociological knowledge also itself becomes a part of common sense knowledge. For example- sociological research into marital breakdown has led people to believe that marriage is a risky proposition.

Till about 17th Century, common sense and science were not seen in mutually exclusive terms. This belief was strengthened by likes of Moore and Reid who argued that common sense and science are together used to expand man's understanding of truth. According to Hegel, all philosophy gradually develops from the ordinary day-to-day consciousness and daily lived experience and hence, every ordinary person is also a social theorist.

As Scientific Method gained momentum in social sciences, method was seen as imperative in any social investigation. Durkheim out-rightly rejected the role of common sense in sociological analysis and he termed it as deceptive, unrealistic, un-testified and speculative. According to him - Common sense perceptions are prejudices which can mar the scientific study of social world.' Marxists on the other hand consider it as ideological with limited understanding of the world.

However, Scientific Method in Sociology is out rightly rejected by phenomenologist like Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann and Alfred Schutz. Post-modernists also claim that sociological knowledge is no superior to common sense as there is no such thing as complete gospel and sociological principles are equally uncertain as common sense. According to Goffman, this is the knowledge that people use to make judgments and navigate their way around the world. According to some ethnomethodologists and phenomenologists, though the words used by the people in everyday speech are not subject to rigorous definition and there are no set criteria for establishing what other people mean or are talking about people manage, well enough, with this seemingly unsystematic body of knowledge called common sense. Hence, Sociology follows a false path when it tries to ape the sciences and should instead content itself with the more everyday credentials of common-sense knowledge.

From another perspective, Gramsci identified common sense thought with the masses and theoretical thought with the elite. Thus, sociologists perception towards common sense changed over time as the discipline evolved. Earlier, when it was close to philosophy, common sense was seen as complementary. When discipline moved closer to Positivism, common sense was almost discarded. Anti-Positivist on the other hand again tried to give importance to common sense. So, relationship between the two is dynamic and even mutually reinforcing at times.

SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

IAS GURUKUL

SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

What is Science & Scientific method?

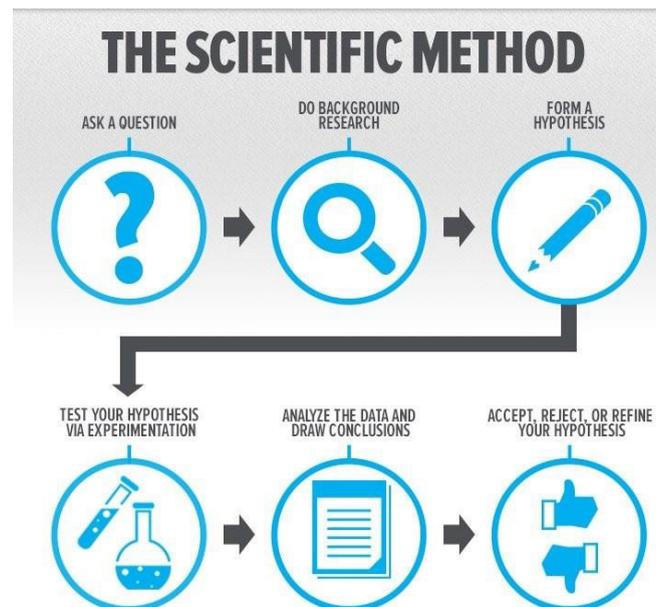
Science (from Latin *scientia*, meaning "knowledge") is a systematic enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe.

Scientific research

Scientific research can be labeled as either basic or applied research. Basic research is the search for knowledge and applied research is the search for solutions to practical problems using this knowledge. Although some scientific research is applied research into specific problems, a great deal of our understanding comes from the curiosity-driven undertaking of basic research. This leads to options for technological advance that were not planned or sometimes even imaginable. This point was made by Michael Faraday when allegedly in response to the question "what is the *use* of basic research?" he responded: "Sir, what is the use of a new-born child?" For example, research into the effects of red light on the human eye's rod cells did not seem to have any practical purpose; eventually, the discovery that our night vision is not troubled by red light would lead search and rescue teams (among others) to adopt red light in the cockpits of jets and helicopters. Finally, even basic research can take unexpected turns, and there is some sense in which the scientific method is built to harness luck.

Scientific method

Scientific research involves using the scientific method, which seeks to objectively explain the events of nature in a reproducible way. An explanatory thought experiment or hypothesis is put forward as explanation using principles such as parsimony (also known as "Occam's Razor") and are generally expected to seek consilience – fitting well with other accepted facts related to the phenomena. This new explanation is used to make falsifiable predictions that are testable by experiment or observation. The predictions are to be posted before a confirming experiment or observation is sought, as proof that no tampering has occurred. Disproof of a prediction is evidence of progress. This is done partly through observation of natural phenomena, but also through experimentation that tries to simulate natural events under controlled conditions as appropriate to the discipline (in the observational sciences, such as astronomy or geology, a predicted observation might take the place of a controlled experiment). Experimentation is especially important in science to help establish causal relationships (to avoid the correlation fallacy).



When a hypothesis proves unsatisfactory, it is either modified or discarded. If the hypothesis survived testing, it may become adopted into the framework of a scientific theory, a logically reasoned, self-consistent model or framework for describing the behavior of certain natural phenomena. A theory typically describes the behavior of much broader sets of phenomena than a hypothesis; commonly, a large number of hypotheses can be logically bound together by a single theory. Thus a theory is a hypothesis explaining various other hypotheses. In that vein, theories are formulated according to most of the same scientific principles as hypotheses. In addition to testing hypotheses, scientists may also generate a model, an attempt to describe or depict the phenomenon in terms of a logical, physical or mathematical representation and to generate new hypotheses that can be tested, based on observable phenomena.

While performing experiments to test hypotheses, scientists may have a preference for one outcome over another, and so it is important to ensure that science as a whole can eliminate this bias. This can be achieved by careful experimental design, transparency, and a thorough peer review process of the experimental results as well as any conclusions. After the results of an experiment are announced or published, it is normal practice for independent researchers to double-check how the research was performed, and to follow up by performing similar experiments to determine how dependable the results might be. Taken in its entirety, the scientific method allows for highly creative problem solving while minimizing any effects of subjective bias on the part of its users (especially the confirmation bias).

Verifiability

John Ziman points out that intersubjective verifiability is fundamental to the creation of all scientific knowledge. Ziman shows how scientists can identify patterns to each other across centuries; he refers to this ability as "perceptual consensibility." He then makes consensibility, leading to consensus, the touchstone of reliable knowledge.

POSITIVISM AND ITS CRITIQUE

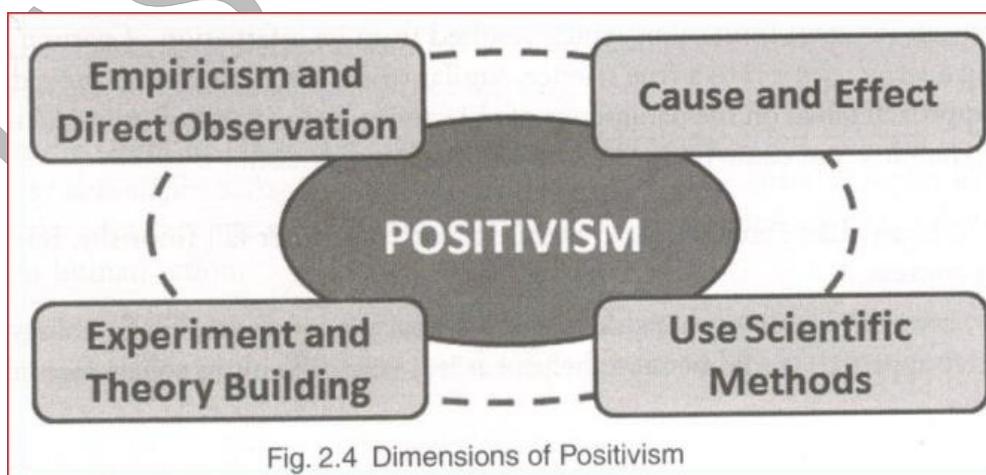
Early sociologists faced two fundamental questions about the future course of the discipline -

- I. What should be the subject matter of the discipline?
- II. What should be the methodology in Sociology?

Influenced by the prevailing atmosphere of rationalism and science, they too attempted to define the subject and the method in scientific and objective terms. Thus, early sociologists like Saint Simon, Comte, Spencer and Durkheim laid the foundation of positivistic theory. They contended that society is also governed by certain fixed laws and hence, is predictable. They believed that application of methods and assumption of natural science will lead to positive science of society and evolution of society follows invariable laws. According to this approach, behaviour of man can also be objectively measured and statements based on objective measures of cause and effect can be made leading to formulation of theories.

Positivism is an approach of studying Sociology as a discipline which aims at employing principles, similar to those in natural science. August Comte was the founder of this approach in Sociology. According to Saint Simon - 'Positivism was rooted in a science of society which is analogous to natural science' and he published a six volume positive philosophy, 1830-42 which enunciated the principles of the new disciplines for the first time.

Comte further concretised the conception of a positivist discipline as true knowledge is based upon thinking about physical and social world as a causal relationship between realities which we can observe either directly or indirectly. He further stated that the search for laws of society uses both reason as well as observation. Positivism, thus, also aims at understanding the world as a sequence of cause and effect. According to Comte - 'Sociology is the last and the most sophisticated of all the sciences as it deals with all aspects of humanity and society'. He even suggested four methods for the study of new discipline, viz. Observation, Experimentation, Historical and Comparative. He defined the scope of new positive social science as - social dynamics, dealing with social change and social statics dealing with the equilibrium and stability of social system. Later, Durkheim laid down its further principles. Other like Spencer also emphasised on a positive science of society.



Main features associated with Positivism are -

I. It lays particular emphasis on behaviour that can be directly observed. Factors like feelings and meanings which cannot be directly observed are not important.

II. It emphasised upon understanding external realities and rejected the study of internal aspects like meanings and motives. Durkheim called for studying social facts as these are seen objectively in a similar manner by everyone.

III. It gave primacy to the discovery of cause and effect relationship while studying phenomenon.

IV. It stressed upon the use of Scientific Methods similar to those used in natural sciences. For example, Durkheim used statistical technique, similar to natural sciences, in his famous study of suicide.

V. It focused upon empiricism and rejected commonsensical speculations. Positivism, more accurately in fact, can also be called empiricism.

VI. Positivism also focused on formulation of theories and universality of laws and principles.

VII. Based upon the knowledge and theories, it also talked about predictability of social events. For example, Comte believed that he has discovered a law of social organisation which can predict future course of evolution of societies and he also mentioned the various stages in this process.

VIII. It emphasised upon using deductive approaches. It gave primacy to theorising in a similar fashion as natural sciences.

IX. Finally, Positivists argued that sociological knowledge should be testable. In fact, Positivists believed that true knowledge is the one which can be tested.

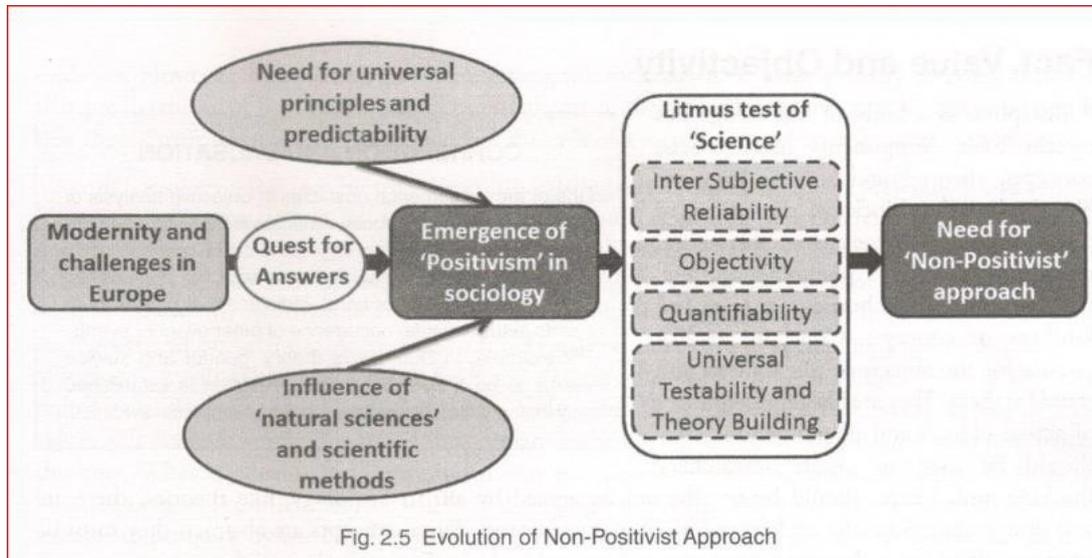
Thus, Positivism glorified the idea that human behaviour and working of society is predictable and like natural sciences, it can also be quantified in concrete terms. They tried to make Sociology a scientific discipline, different from other social sciences like History and Philosophy, which have subjectivity speculations and value elements. Marxists and functionalists both invariably fall under the category of Positivists as they make deterministic and predictive statements about the social actors.

However, soon it was realised that Sociology cannot be developed as a purely Positivist discipline. Primarily, it was because Sociology dealt with human element with a subjective conscience which cannot be deciphered totally by the objective methods. (See fig. 2.4)

Positivism has certain inherent limitations which resulted from its infatuation of natural sciences. The project of making a social science into a true science, similar to natural sciences soon proved troublesome as the Positivist approach failed on the parameters of objectivity, quantifiability, universal testability and inter-subjective reliability and came under the following major criticism -

I. Phenomenologists like Peter Berger contended that facts never fall from sky, but develop in a particular context.

II. Gradually, it was also realised that a deductive approach is less fruitful in Sociology and instead, an inductive approach would be more helpful as it is very difficult to collect facts about abstract phenomena.



III. Positivism was also considered a fundamental misunderstanding of reality. Later, Non-Positivists approaches favoured the study of phenomenon in terms of meanings attached by the actors. Weber talked about emphasising on social action and not on social facts. Alfred Schulz contends that humans construct their world through common sense, ethical values, assumptions and presumptions. So, a sociologist must respect these while undertaking research.

IV. Positivists were also criticised for their over-emphasis on universalism which is not possible in Sociology.

V. Scientific Methods also have their limited applicability in Sociology as there is subjectivity over their use. Investigative methods are often accused of being biased towards participants. Similarly, complete objectivity is also not possible.

VI. Adorno indicates that social life exists in layers. Positivists focus only on one or two layers. Sociologist must use critical mind to analyse multiple layers.

VII. Positivists explanations are also difficult to test, contrary to their claim.

VIII. Possible fallout of over-emphasis on Positivist Sociology is emergence of scientific social theories, like racial-superiority, that have dangerous fallouts. Scientific Marxism led to great miseries in communist countries. Fascism led to mass murders of Jews on the back of scientific racial explanations by social scientists. (See fig. 2.5)

In short, in the words of Habermas, Positivism loses sight of the actors reducing them to passive entities determined by natural forces. As the actor in society is distinct, the critical theorists like Habermas would not accept the idea that the general laws of science can be applied without taking into account the autonomous human action.

However, one big achievement of Positivists was that, they freed social sciences from the clutches of religion and speculative philosophy and laid a solid foundation of a systematic investigation in society.

FACT, VALUE AND OBJECTIVITY

The word **fact** derives from the Latin *factum*. A fact is something that has really occurred or is actually the case. The usual test for a statement of fact is its verifiability, that is, whether it can be proven to correspond to experience. Scientific facts are verified by repeatable experiments. Thus, a fact is regarded as an empirically verifiable observation. A **theory**, on the other hand, is a set of ideas which provides an explanation for something. It is an abstract and generalized statement which tends to establish a logical interrelationship between facts (concepts or variables). Theories involve constructing abstract interpretations that can be used to explain a wide variety of empirical situations.

Thus, in sociology, we can say that a sociological theory is a set of ideas which provides an explanation for human society. As discussed earlier, sociology is a scientific study of society and as we know that scientific research is a guided search for facts based on the formulated hypothesis. A hypothesis is a tentative statement asserting a relationship between certain facts. It is the hypothesis that guides the researcher what data to look for. A social scientist or researcher conducts a field research and collects data (facts) in order to test the hypothesis. After data collection, data is processed. Thereafter, the researcher tests the hypothesis against the processed data. If the hypothesis is proved (i.e. supported by data) then it becomes **thesis** – if it is repeatedly proved, it becomes a **theory** and if it is almost universally true, then it becomes the **law**.

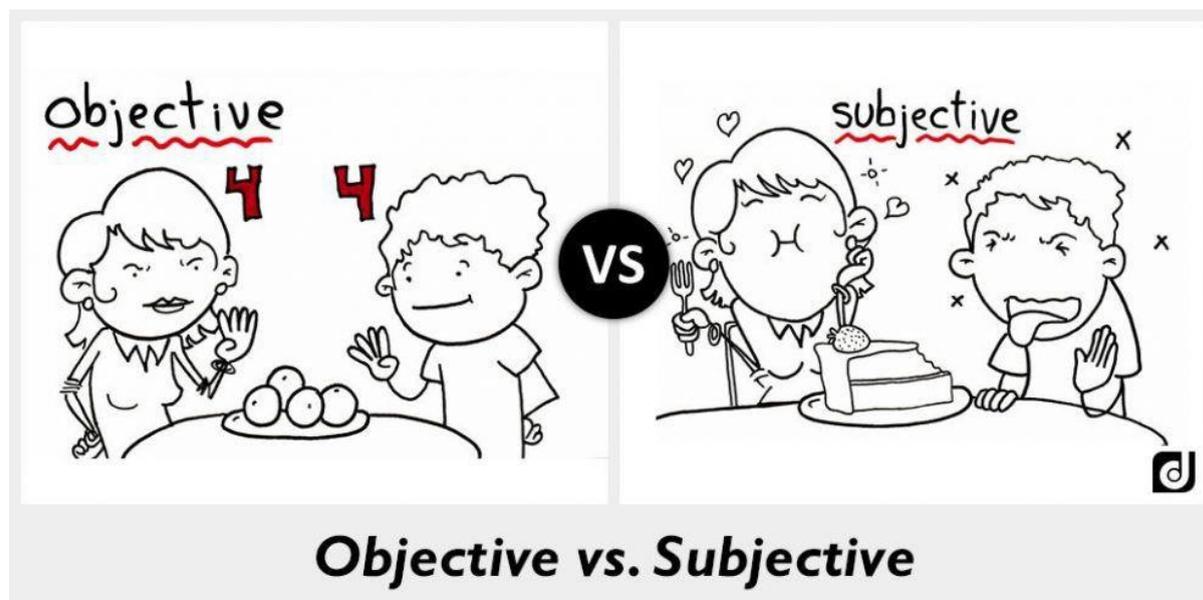
Thesis → Theory → Law

Thesis, Theory and Law, they all are generalizations. They represent different degrees of generalizations. In natural sciences, we hear about several laws but in social sciences we only have theories. Social sciences study social behaviour of man which is guided by unique meanings and motives, values and beliefs, etc. Hence, given the diversity and dynamism of human society in general, it is nearly impossible to arrive at a universally valid generalization or law of human society.

Let us now discuss the interrelationship of theory and facts (empirical research). Robert K. Merton, the American sociologist, has elaborated on this aspect in detail in his essays. In his essay '*The bearing of sociological theory on empirical research*' he argues that without a theoretical approach, we would not know what facts to look for in beginning a study or in interpreting the results of research. Often, existing theories serve as a source for hypothesis formulation and thus stimulate and guide further research resulting in discovery of new facts. For example, Marxian theory suggests that increasing economic inequalities are the primary cause of alienation and class conflict in modern capitalist societies. This theory can serve as a source for our hypothesis to understand the rising discontentment among masses in the contemporary Indian

society. Thus you may start exploring that to what extent economic inequality is a factor in the rise of Naxalism or caste conflicts in rural India, etc. Thus theory helps to define which kinds of facts are relevant. Secondly, theory establishes a rational link between two or more variables and thus can act as a tool for prediction and control. For example, various theories have highlighted female education as a critical factor in the overall social development. Thus, in order to improve their ranking on the social development index, countries with low female education can initiate female education programmes at national level because we now know that female education has direct bearing on the social development of a society. Thirdly, as stated earlier, theory is an abstract and generalized statement which tends to establish a logical interrelationship between facts (concepts or variables). Theories involve constructing abstract interpretations and thus make the knowledge cross-culturally useful. For example, Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy is nothing but an abstraction which can serve as tool for a comparative study of bureaucratic models across societies.

Merton in his another essay '*The bearing of empirical research on sociological theory*' argues that empirical research is generally assigned a rather passive role: the testing or verification of hypotheses. Merton argues that empirical research goes far beyond the passive role of verifying and testing theory: it does more than confirm or refute hypotheses. According to Merton, research plays an active role: it performs at least four major functions which help shape the development of theory. It *initiates*, it *reformulates*, it *deflects* and it *clarifies* theory. Merton explain in his essay that how under certain conditions, a research finding gives rise to social theory. He calls it '*serendipity pattern*'. Merton argues that fruitful empirical research not only tests theoretically derived hypothesis, it also originates new hypothesis. This might be termed the 'serendipity' component of research, *i.e.*, the discovery, by chance or sagacity, of valid results which were not sought for. In simpler words, it implies that during the course of research some unanticipated but strategic data may come to light, which may initiate a new theory altogether. For example, Elton Mayo, a professor at the Harvard Business School, in his investigation at the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric Company in Chicago, conducted a series of experiments designed to investigate the relationship between working conditions and productivity. Mayo began with the assumptions of scientific management believing that the physical conditions of the work environment, the aptitude of the worker and the financial incentives were the main determinants of productivity. However, during the course of his research Mayo struck upon the role of informal groups and group norms in determining the productivity. From the Hawthorne studies, developed the human relations school, which challenged and led to the reformulation of the conventional scientific management approach. It stated that scientific management provided too narrow a view of man and that financial incentives alone were insufficient to motivate workers and ensure their cooperation. The Hawthorne studies moved the emphasis from the individual worker to the worker as a member of a social group. The behaviour of the worker was seen as a response to group norms rather than simply being directed by economic incentives and management designed work schemes. It was found that the informal work groups develop their own norms and values which are enforced by the application of group sanctions. The power of such sanctions derives from the dependence of the individual upon the group. He has a basic need to belong, to feel part of a social group. He needs approval, recognition and status, needs which cannot be satisfied if he fails to conform to group norms.



Objective vs. Subjective

Thus there is an intricate relation between theory and fact. Facts (empirical research) and theory are inherently dependent on each other. Factual research and theories can never completely be separated. We can only develop valid theoretical approaches if we are able to test them out by means of factual research.

Values are socially accepted standards of desirability. In other words, a value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important and worthwhile. Values differ from society to society and culture to culture.

The significance of facts was asserted by the early founding fathers of sociology, be it Comte, Spencer or Durkheim. Remember? We had discussed earlier that how these scholars advocated a positivist approach to study society i.e. they emphasised on the study of only those aspects of social reality which could be empirically observed and hence quantified. Anti-positivist scholars, on the other hand, argued that the subject matter of sociology is the study of human behaviour in society and all human behaviour is guided by values. Hence, these scholars, be it Max Weber, Mead, etc. suggested social action approach to study society.

Role of values in sociological enquiry and the problem of objectivity

The subject matter of sociology is the study of human behaviour in society. All human behaviour is guided by values. Moreover, social research is in itself a type of social behaviour guided by the value of 'search for true knowledge.' Values are socially accepted standards of desirability. In other words, a value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important and worthwhile. Values differ from society to society and culture to culture. For example, in West, the dominant values are individualism and materialism which are this-worldly in nature. While in India, *moksha* had been a long cherished goal of human life which is other-worldly in nature.

In order to have a complete understanding of man's social behaviour it is not only important but also necessary to take into account the unique meanings, motives and values that underlie such behaviour. Initially this view was advocated by anti-positivist scholars (also known as neo-Kantian scholars in Germany) like Wilhelm Dilthey, Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert. Later, Weber also argued that behaviour of man in society is qualitatively different from that of physical objects and biological organisms. He argued that unlike matter, man has consciousness – thoughts, feelings, meanings, intentions and an awareness of being. Because of this, his actions are meaningful. He defines situations and gives meaning to his actions and those of others. As a result, he does not merely react to external stimuli. He does not simply behave, he acts. Thus, if action stems from subjective meanings, it follows that the sociologist must discover those meanings in order to understand action. He cannot simply observe action from the outside and impose an external logic upon it. He must interpret the internal logic which directs the actions of the actor.

However, the views mentioned above are quite antithetical to the propositions of positivist tradition in sociology. August Comte, who is credited with inventing the term sociology and regarded as one of the founders of the discipline, maintained that the application of the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences would produce a 'positive science of society'. In terms of sociology, the positivist approach makes the following assumptions. The behaviour of man, like the behaviour of matter, can be objectively measured. Just as the behaviour of matter can be quantified by measures such as weight, temperature and pressure, methods of objective measurement can also be devised for human behaviour. The positivist approach in sociology places particular emphasis on behaviour that can be directly observed. It argues that factors which are not directly observable such as meanings, feelings, motives, etc. are not particularly important and can be misleading. This is best manifested in the works of Durkheim. Durkheim in his "*Rules of Sociological Method*" states that social facts must be treated as 'things' and all the preconceived notions about the social facts must be abandoned.

On the basis of the above discussed ideas of both positivist and anti-positivist scholars, one thing is clear that without taking into account the values that underlie human behaviour, a comprehensive understanding of man's social behaviour would not be possible. Our reliance on positivist approach alone would produce a partial picture of social reality. But if we undertake study of values as well in the course of sociological research then the problem of objectivity raises its head (because we know that values are subjective). Let us now discuss what does objectivity mean and how different scholars have tried to address the problem of objectivity in sociology.

Objectivity is a 'frame of mind' so that the personal prejudices or preferences of the social scientists do not contaminate the collection and analysis of data. Objectivity is the goal of scientific investigation. Sociology also being a science aspires for the goal of objectivity. Thus, scientific investigations should be free from the prejudices of race, colour, religion, sex or ideological biases. The need of objectivity in sociological research has been emphasized by all important sociologists. For example, Durkheim, in this '*Rules of the Sociological Method*' stated that 'social facts' must be treated as 'things' and all preconceived notions about the social facts must be abandoned. Even Max Weber emphasized the need of objectivity when he said that sociology must be value-free. According to Radcliffe-Brown, the social scientist must abandon or transcend his ethnocentric and egocentric biases while carrying out researches.

Similarly, Malinowski advocated 'cultural relativism' while conducting anthropological field work in order to ensure objectivity.

However, objectivity continues to be an elusive goal at the practical level. In fact, one school of thought represented by Gunnar Myrdal states that complete objectivity in social sciences is a myth. Gunnar Myrdal in his book 'Objectivity in Social Research' argues that total objectivity is an illusion which can never be achieved. Because all research is always guided by certain viewpoints and viewpoints involve subjectivity. Myrdal argues that subjectivity creeps in at various stages in the course of sociological research. For example, the very choice of topic of research is influenced by personal preferences and ideological biases of the researcher. How personal preferences influence the choice of topic of research can be illustrated from a study made by Prof. Schwab. In his study he analyzed 4000 scientific papers produced over a span of centuries. He found that the choice made by scientists in pursuing their research was based on their personal preferences as determined by personality factors and social circumstances.

Besides personal preferences, the ideological biases, acquired in the course of education and training also have a bearing on the choice of the topic of research. The impact of ideological biases on social research can be very far reaching as can be seen from the study of Tepostalan village in Mexico. Robert Redfield studied it with a functionalist perspective and concluded that there exists total harmony between various groups in the village while Oscar Lewis studied this village at almost the same time from Marxist perspective, and found that the society was conflict ridden. Here we can see that how the differences of ideological perspectives had a bearing on the research findings even though the society studied was the same.

Subjectivity can also creep in at the time of formulation of hypothesis. Normally hypotheses are deduced from existing body of theory. Now all sociological theories are produced by and limited to particular groups whose view points and interests they represent. Thus formulation of hypotheses will automatically introduce a bias in the sociological research.

The fourth stage at which subjectivity creeps in the course of research is that of collection of empirical data. No technique of data collection is perfect. Each technique may lead to subjectivity in one way or the other. For example, in case of participant observation, the observer as a result of 'nativisation' acquires a bias in favour of the group he is studying. While in non-participant observation, the sociologist belongs to a different group than that under study. He is likely to impose his values and prejudices. In all societies there are certain prejudices. For e.g., in America, people have prejudices against the Blacks and in India, people have prejudices against untouchables or women. Such prejudices of the observer may influence his observation. Further, in case of interview as a technique of data collection, the data may be influenced by (i) context of the interview; (ii) interaction of the participants; (iii) participants' definition of the situation; (iv) and if adequate rapport does not extend between them there might be communication barriers. Thus, according to P.V. Young, interview sometimes carries a double dose of subjectivity.

Finally subjectivity can also creep in due to field limitations as was found in case of Andre Beteille's study of Sripuram village in Tanjore where the Brahmins did not allow him to visit the untouchable locality and study their point of view.

Thus complete objectivity continues to be an elusive goal. Myrdal argues that sociology at best could aspire for the goal of value-neutrality on the part of the researcher. This could be attained by either of the following ways:

- i. The researcher should exclude all ideological or non-scientific assumptions from his research;
- ii. The researcher should make his value-preference clear in the research monograph. As Weber has also stated that the researcher should be value-frank;
- iii. The researcher should not make any evaluative judgement about empirical evidence;
- iv. The researcher should remain indifferent to the moral implication of his research;
- v. Highly trained and skilled research workers should be employed.
- vi. Various methods of data collection should be used and the result obtained from one should be cross checked with those from the other.
- vii. Field limitations must be clearly stated in the research monograph.

Eminent sociologist T. K. Oommen in his book *Knowledge and Society* emphasizes the importance of 'contextualization' in sociological enquiry. Oommen argues that while objectivity in natural sciences is *generalizing objectivity*, in social sciences it is *particularizing objectivity*. He suggests that objectivity in social sciences has to be *contextual objectivity*. Contextual objectivity, according to Oommen, can be determined by intra-subjectivity and inter-subjectivity. Intra-subjectivity is one where the same researcher (with his given value orientation) studies the same object (the social group) at two different points of time and arrives at the similar conclusions. Inter-subjectivity, on the other hand, is one when two researchers (with similar value orientations) study the same object at the same time and arrive at similar conclusions.

Of late, a group of American sociologists who have come to be known as 'radical sociologists', have advocated that total value-neutrality is not desirable. Commitment to total political neutrality reduces the sociologist to the status of a mere spectator and sociologists can play no creative role in the society. After all the basic purpose of sociological knowledge is social welfare. But, given such excessive preoccupation with value-neutrality, the role of sociologists has been like, to use W.H. Auden's phrase, "Lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down." C. Wright Mills has also complained that sociology has lost its 'reforming push'. Alvin W. Gouldner, most remembered for his work *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970), argued that sociology must turn away from producing objective truths and understand the subjective nature of sociology and knowledge in general and how it is bound up with the context of the times. He called for a *reflexive sociology* in which there would be no forgetting of the idea that the sociologist

was part of society and played a social role. As the commonplace has it, sociology cannot be practiced outside its historical and social context. Thus, according to C. Wright Mills, Alvin W. Gouldner and others, sociology must have commitment to certain basic human values and sociologists should be ready to defend human freedom and the pursuit of reason.

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RESEARCH METHODS & ANALYSIS

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RESEARCH METHODS & ANALYSIS

Social Research and Its Importance

What is Research?

Research is an attempt to know new things, facts, information, etc. in a scientific manner. Its main purpose is to diffuse knowledge and establish theories on the basis of the believable facts. As L.V. Redman and A.V. H.Mory have said, systematised effort to gain new knowledge we call research .

A research scientist makes an untiring effort to collect new facts, information and knowledge about things or phenomena. He may not become, always successful in all his efforts to collect new facts. But the desire to know new things persists in him. Hence F.A. Ogg has pointed out Research may or may not come to success; it may or may not add anything to what is already known. It is sufficient that its objective be held knowledge or at least a new mode or orientation of knowledge .

The method that is followed in order to carry on research is scientific method In general terms it can be said that research is the aim and the scientific method is the means of attaining it. Research in whatever science it is carried on, follows the same scientific method. As C.R. Kothari' pointed out the philosophy common to all research methods and techniques, although they may vary considerably from one science to another, is usually given the name of scientific method.

The basic purpose of science is to establish the systematic relationship between facts. Hence all sciences are bound to follow the scientific method which is dedicated to provide us the truth or innate reality. Karl Pearson has rightly said that“ the scientific method is one and the same in the Tranches of (science) and that method is the method of all logically trained minds ...the unity of all sciences consists alone in its methods, not its material, the man who classifies the facts of any kind whatever, who sees their mutual relation and describes these sequences, is applying the scientific method and is a man of science.

Social Research : Meaning and Definition

Not only in the field of physical science but also in the realm of social sciences researches are taking place. The youngest of the social sciences that is sociology is also doing a lot of research work. Sociological research is highly interesting and exciting. Research in sociology is really a kind of systematic detective work. It faces innumerable puzzles and suspicions, withstands disappointments and discouragements, challenges blind faith and hearsays and finally becomes successful in unraveling the mystery that clouds the truth.

Research today has become a part of sociology. Research in sociology is where the real action takes place. In fact, there are two sides to the sociological enterprise: theory and research. Both are essential, and each depends on the other and each hinges on the other. Facts without theory are utterly meaningless. Theories without facts are unproved speculations of little use to anybody, because there is no way to tell whether they are correct. Theory and research thus go together. A theory inspires research that can be used to verify or disprove it, and the findings of research are used to confirm, reject or modify the theory, or even to provide the basis of new theories. This process recurs endlessly.

Definition of Social Research

1. According to Pauline V.Young, ... social research is a systematic method of exploring, analysing and conceptualising social life in order to "extend, correct, or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in the construction of a theory or in the practice of an art."
2. Stating it still differently, social research seeks to find explanations to unexplained social phenomena to clarify the doubtful and correct the misconceived fact of social life.
3. Pauline V.Young has also said that " social research may be defined as a scientific undertaking which, by means of logical and systematised techniques aims to (1) discover new facts or verify and test old facts. (2) analyse their sequences, interrelationships, and causal explanations. (3) develop new scientific tools, concepts and theories which would facilitate reliable and valid study of human behaviour".
4. According to Wallace and Wallace, " Sociological research refers to the structural observation of social behaviour .

Importance of Social Research

Research is carried on in the social field not just with academic interests. It has both academic and non-academic purposes and importance. Importance of research can be briefly stated here. 1. Research is essential to diffuse knowledge and to expand its horizon.

2. Research helps us to verify or disprove, confirm or reject, modify and re-assert the existing theories and to establish new ones.
3. Research provides practical clues, to undertake measures that lead to social improvement, social change and social progress.
4. Research by probing into the perplexing problems of the day... provides new insight regarding their nature. Research helps us to know the nature and the magnitude of the problems.
5. Researches have commercial importance also. Industries, business firms and commercial establishments can get lot of information and clues about their endeavours in society.
6. Research can provide all the required data and facts to the administrators to adopt and undertake appropriate policies, plans and programmes.
7. Research has educational importance. It is mainly an intellectual activity. Information obtained through research may have their educational importance.
8. Research motivates interdisciplinary studies. It stresses the interdependence of different sciences. It thus strengthens the interdisciplinary approach which is emerging out these days.

9. Other Uses and Importance

- (i) Those working in the academic field can obtain a new degree known as Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] by successfully carrying out research as per the stipulated rules.
- (ii) Those working in the research department attached to industries, other types of establishments have made research their profession and obtain salary for their service. It provides job opportunities for a few intellectuals.
- (iii) For the philosophers and scientists research can be intellectually delighting and mentally satisfying, and
- (iv) Those who are in the field of literature, art, architecture, etc., can seek to establish new styles and trends through research.

DIFFICULTIES OR PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Unlike in the physical sciences, conducting research in the field of sociology is problematic. The sociologist's subject-matter presents some difficult research problems of a kind that natural scientists rarely have to deal with. Sociologists are dealing with human beings and not inanimate objects or unreflecting animals. They are people who have self-awareness and complex individual personalities. They are capable of choosing their own course of action for both rational and irrational reasons. The fact that the sociologist is studying human beings poses some major problems to research methodology.

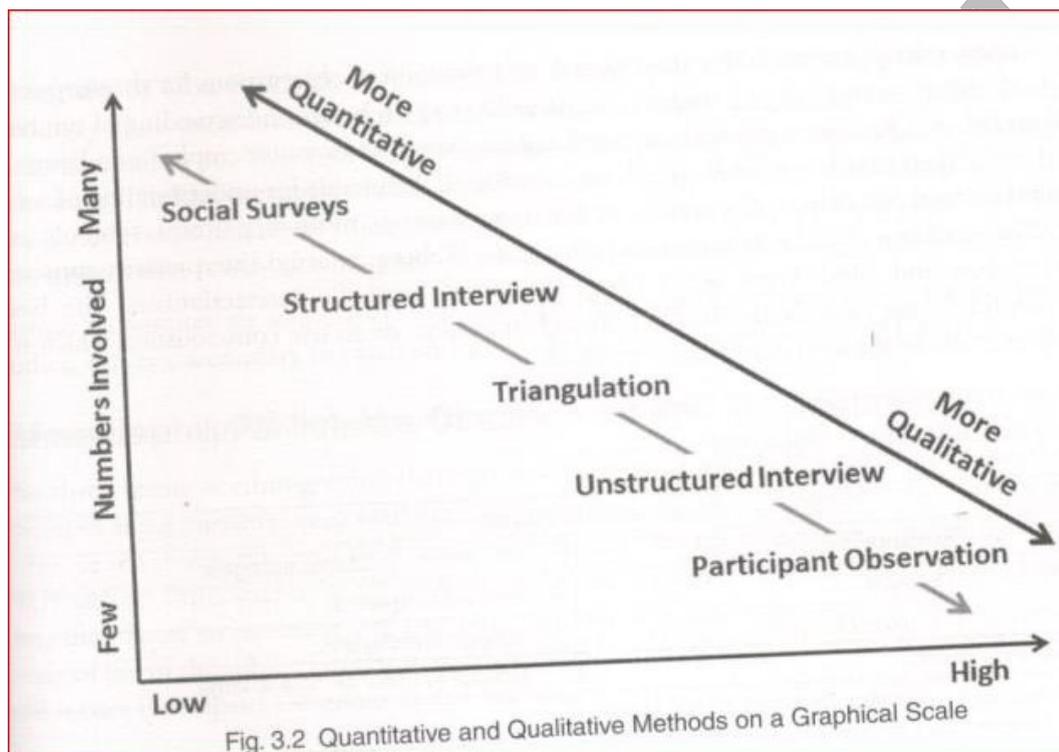
1. The mere act of investigating social behaviour may alter the very behaviour that is being observed: When people come to know that they are being closely watched and observed they may not behave in their usual way. The presence, personality and actions of the observer can disrupt the behaviour that is being investigated.
2. People unlike flies or worms, mountains or aeroplanes have emotions, motives, and other highly individual personality characteristics: They may give false information deliberately or unintentionally or by ignorance. They may fail to understand a question put to them or they may misinterpret it. They may cancel certain facts for reasons of their own. They may also behave in unpredictable ways for a variety of peculiar reasons of their own. It is for this reason sociological explanations and predictions are often less precise than those of the physical sciences.
3. The origins of social behaviour are almost always extremely complex, involving many social, psychological, historical and other factors: Establishing the cause-and-effect relationship is highly problematic here. It is relatively easy to establish why water boils and how fire burns and bomb explodes. It is much more difficult to establish why people fall in love, why do they kill, why do they lie, etc. The causes of social behaviour are usually innumerable and intricate.
4. For ethical reasons it becomes difficult to perform certain kinds of experiments on human beings: These moral questions do not disturb the physical scientists who are experimenting with water, gas, rays, minerals, etc. In the human world, the dignity and privacy of human beings must be respected. We cannot deliberately make the young boys to stay with young girls separately for a couple of days or weeks just to test or assess the intensity of sex-morals, which have already been taught to them. Similarly, we cannot make husbands to divorce their wives to study the impact of divorce on children. Ethical considerations place severe limitations on the methods the sociologists can use.
5. The sociologist, unlike the physical scientist, is part of the very subject he or she is studying. It is therefore very difficult for a sociologist to maintain objectivity or detached attitude towards his own study. An astronomer may look at and observe the heavenly bodies without being disturbed emotionally. On the contrary, the sociologist who is studying issues such as communal riots, race relations, ethnic conflicts, etc. can become passionately involved in the outcome of the research. The researcher may identify strongly with the problems and experiences of the subjects. As a result, the process of investigation and interpretation get distorted.

Sociologists are aware of these problems involved in their research work. In spite of these problems they aim to make sociology as exact and precise a science as possible. Most of the sociologists probably accept the viewpoint expressed by Max Weber many decades ago. Weber believed that sociology must model itself as far as possible on the natural sciences, but its subject-matter, being so different, sometimes also calls for an interpretative, subjective approach. '

As Ian Robertson has pointed out subjective interpretation which Weber called *Verstehen* ', or sympathetic understanding is in no sense a substitute for the scientific method. Wherever possible, the conclusions drawn from subjective interpretation must be verified by the scientific method''

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

Since there are multiple truths and multiple perspectives in Sociology, it is hardly surprising that there are also multiple research methods. There is no single unique road to sociological truth. It is futile to argue about the superiority or inferiority of different methods. It is more important to ask if the method chosen is the appropriate one for answering the question that is being asked. For example, if one is interested in finding out whether most Indian families are still joint families, then a census or survey may be the best method. However, if one wishes to compare the status of women in joint and nuclear families, then interviews, case studies or Participant Observation may all be appropriate methods. (See fig. 3.2)



Quantitative methods were given a prime focus by the early sociologists. Positivist perspectives guided the method in Sociology during its early years. Early Positivist were influenced by their orientation towards natural sciences and emphasised on quantitative methods. Quantitative methods employ a systematic, scientific investigation of quantitative properties of a phenomenon in order to develop different types of theories and they generate a quantifiable image of reality. So, Positivists and functionalists use this method more often. Durkheim was one of the earliest pioneers through his theory of suicide. Process of measurement is central to these methods as it provides a fundamental connection between empirical observation and an expression of quantitative relationship. Thus, measurable data collection is the primary aim. Quantitative data is easy to represent through tables, graphs, pie-charts, histograms, histograms and other curves. The drawbacks of quantitative research methods are many. Only questions that have simple answers can be asked and we have no way of benefiting from the questioners observations of how the question is answered, i.e., what logic or argument is used in answering the question.

There can be various types of Quantitative Methods like-Statistics, Comparative Methods, Multivariate Analysis, Surveys, Structured Interviews, Close Ended Questionnaires and Sampling.

Quantitative Methods	
Advantages	Disadvantages
a. Objectivity is higher.	a. Method becomes difficult as size of variables or population increases.
b. Easy measurement as expertise is not required	b. Cannot be used for non-observable attributes.
c. Validity and reliability is easier to check.	
d. Less user bias and subject bias.	
e. Reproducibility is higher.	

Qualitative Methods refer to examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship to gain better understanding of symbols, motives and meanings. Qualitative methods emerged as a reaction to an excessive emphasis on Positivist research, and use of quantitative methods, which was considered unsuitable for understanding of social reality. Qualitative methods help in discovering underlying meanings, motives, patterns, symbols, etc. So, Interpretivists and Non-Positivists favour such methods. Weber pioneered Interpretivist approach and used Verstehen and Ideal Types while Mead pioneered Symbolic Interactionism. The basic assumption behind the use of such data is that human beings have subjective consciousness which is a non-measurable attribute through quantitative methods.

There can be various types of Qualitative Methods like- Observation Method, Unstructured Interview, Case Studies and Focus Group Discussion.

Quantitative Methods	
Advantages	Disadvantages
a. Cheaper for smaller sample.	a. Requires expertise.
b. Give complete understanding of reality.	b. Trained investigator.
c. Data collection is flexible.	c. Difficult to use if sample is large.
d. They have helped in widening the scope of Sociology.	

Attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the two broad methods by finding a middle path. Hybrids like Socio logic by Michel Mann in 1980s and Triangulation Method by Norman K Denzin have also been devised. Such mixed methods employ the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Content analysis, semi-structured interviews, etc. are some of the other methods which are also classified under such mixed methods.

TRIANGULATION

In social research, triangulation is defined as the mixing of methods, data, etc. In the wake of inadequacies of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and data, such a middle path is gaining more popularity in social research. Quantitative methods can describe large or general patterns in the area of sociological research while qualitative approaches can help to explain how individuals understand the patterns. Norman K Denzin was one of the pioneers of such methods and he identifies four types of triangulation in social research -

- I. Data triangulation
- II. Investigator triangulation involving multiple researchers in an investigation
- III. Theory triangulation involving more than one theoretical scheme
- IV. Methodological triangulation involves clubbing various methods. For example, survey data can be mixed with interview or Participant Observation.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Social research is systematic and scientific. It is not just guesswork and imaginative work. Guesswork, intuition, and common sense all have an important part to play in sociological research, but they cannot produce reliable evidence on their own. Reliable evidence can be produced only by using a research methodology.

“A methodology is a system of rules, principles and procedures that guides scientific investigation.

The sociologist is interested in what happens in social world and why it happens. Research methodology provides guidelines for collecting evidence about what takes place and for explaining why it takes place. These findings can be checked and verified by other researchers.

The heart of the research process constitutes the actual procedures that sociologists use to collect their facts. Sociologists use a variety of research methods, systematic techniques for gathering and analysing facts about theories or new phenomena. The following section gives us an overview and examples of the four most common research methods used in sociology today: (i) Observation, (ii) Questionnaire, (iii) Interview, and (iv) The Social Survey Method. Each of these has its advantages and its drawbacks, and the success of the research project depends largely on the researcher's choice of an appropriate method.

1. OBSERVATION

Observation is one of the principal techniques of research in social sciences. Some of the difficulties arising out of the use of interviewing in sociological data-collection can be overcome by combining observation with interviewing, or perhaps by using observation alone. In fact, observation is essential for any scientific study or research. Science begins with observation and must ultimately return to observation for its final validation. Observation may take many forms and is at once the most primitive and the most modern of research techniques. It includes the most casual uncontrolled experiences as well as the most exact firm records of laboratory experimentation. There are many observational techniques and each has its own uses.

Definition of Observation

1. P.G. Gisbert. Observation consists in the application of our mind and its cognitive powers to the phenomena which we are studying” .
2. Ian Robertson. Observational studies usually involve an intensive examination of a particular group, event, or social process. The researcher does not attempt to influence what happens in any way but aims instead at an accurate description and analysis of what takes place.
3. Wallace and Wallace. In an observational study the researcher actually witnesses social behaviour in its natural setting” .
4. In general, we can say that observation is a systematic, direct, definite and deliberate examination of the spontaneous occurrences at the time of their occurrence.

Hypothesis and Observation

The basis for selecting a particular aspect for study is guided by the nature, scope and objectives of the inquiry. Generally, the formulated hypothesis is the guiding element in the immediate observation. For example, we are interested in the problem of juvenile delinquency and have tentatively formulated a hypothesis that juvenile delinquency is caused by broken homes and careless childrearing. Then, to test this, we concentrate our attention on broken homes and observe it as a cause of juvenile delinquency. If our observation demands the rejection of that hypothesis, then a new hypothesis is found in its place.

Observation and Experiment

Observation and experiment as representing two techniques of scientific research are being used in all the sciences. Both the techniques intend to trace the cause-and-effect relationships in the phenomena at study. But the procedures of using these techniques vary according to the material being studied.

Observational studies are like experiments in all respects except one. In an experiment the scientist arranges for something to happen in order to observe what follows, whereas in an observational study the scientist observes something which happens, or has already happened. Both rely upon systematic observation under controlled conditions in a search for verifiable sequences and relationships.

Like the experiment, the observational study can be conducted in the laboratory or in the field. In a laboratory observation, for example, the sociologist might bring a group of subjects together and present them with a problem in order to observe the processes by which leaders emerge and decisions are made. The researcher may make use of instruments such as tape-recorder, camera etc., to record the interaction and to watch. In the field observation, sociologist studies something that is happening or has happened without attempting to structure the conditions of observation. Most observational studies take place in the field only.

Types of Observation

Observation may be of three broad types:

- (i) Non-Controlled, Participant Observation.
- (ii) Non-Controlled Non-participant Observation.
- (iii) Systematic Controlled Observation.

(i) Non-Controlled Participant Observation

This procedure or type is made use of when the observer can so disguise himself as to be accepted as a member of the group under study. The degree of participation of the observer depends largely upon the nature of the study and the practical demands of the situation. The observer must identify himself closely with the group studied, since the subject matter is quite new and requires extensive study.

The sociologist need not carry out exactly the same activities as others in order to be a participant observer. He may find a role in the group which will not disturb the usual patterns of behaviour. This participant observation may vary from complete membership in the group to a part-time membership in the group.

It can be taken for granted that if the members are unaware of the scientist's purpose, their behaviour is least likely to be affected. Thus, we may be able to record the natural behaviour of the group. The observer has access to a body of information, which could not easily be obtained by merely looking on in a disinterested fashion.

Some Examples of Participant Observational Studies

(a) **William Whyte** (1943) took the role of a participant observer in an Italian slum neighbourhood of an American city, that is, Boston. Whyte learnt Italian language and participated in all the activities of the gang such as gambling, drinking alcohol, bowling, etc. The gang knew Whyte as someone who was writing a book. Sociologists had previously presumed that such a slum community would not be highly organised. Whyte showed that it was, although not in tune with the middle-class values.

(b) **Erving Goffman** (1961), an American social psychologist spent many months as an observer in mental hospital. His description gives us an idea as to how the organisation of an asylum systematically depersonalises the patients and may even aggravate their problems.

(c) **Leo Festinger** (1966) and his associates wanted to study a very exclusive cult whose members believed that the end of the world was to come on a certain specified day. Festinger with his associates took part in its meetings by pretending to be believers.

Challenges and Limitations of Participant Observation

Participant observation has its own challenges and limitations.

The Challenges

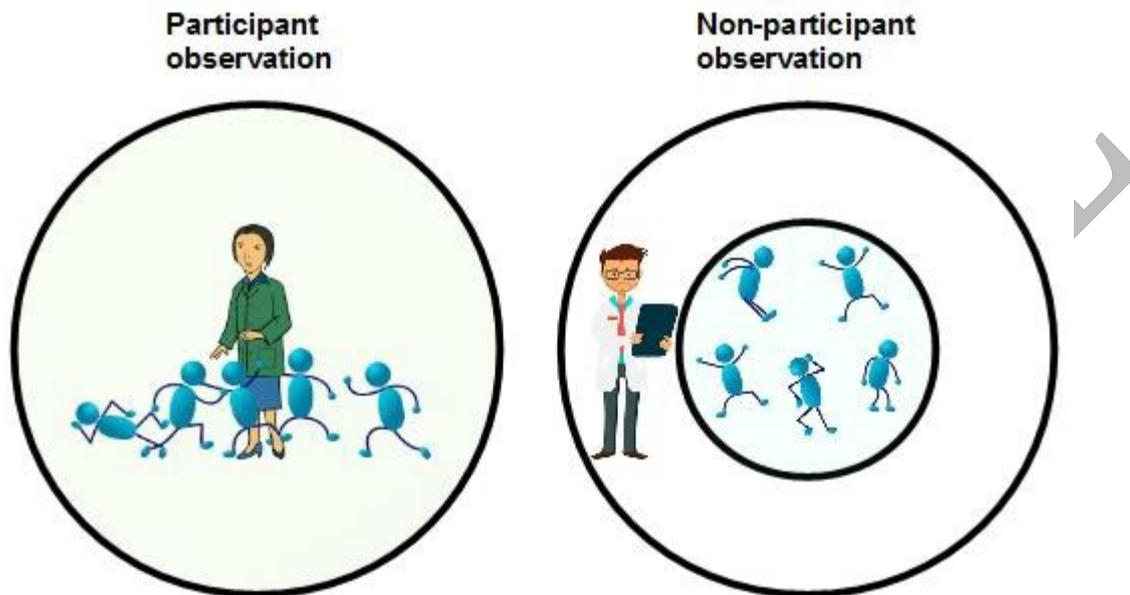
Participant observation brings on the sociologist heavy obligations. (1) The identities of the informants must be protected (2) Systematic notes must be kept each day and memory must be maintained afresh (3) The observer must be careful not to influence the behaviour that he or she is observing (4) Gaining access to the group and winning the confidence of its members is highly challenging (5) This method relies heavily on the skills and subjective interpretations of the observer. Hence the observer must have sufficient competence and experience.

Limitations and Disadvantages

1. The observing researcher has no control over what happens and may have difficulty in putting the observations into systematic form in order to draw conclusions.
2. The number of subjects or people the researcher can observe is small. There are often service problems in gaining entry into a natural setting. Many potential subjects, for example, the very wealthy and the very deviant, do not want to be subjects for the benefit of social science research.
3. The participant observer may become so emotionally involved as to lose objectivity. Instead of keeping himself as a neutral observer he may become a dedicated partisan. Or the participant observer may over generalise that is, assume that what is found in the group studied is also true of all other groups. For example, in the first example cited previously, William Whyte in his study of the Italian slum neighbourhood had eventually become so absorbed with his life as a gang member that he stopped his observation as an impassionate researcher. But Whyte was aware of what was happening in him. He commented: began as a non-participant observer but ended up as a non-observing participator.
4. In participant observation one may have to sacrifice scientific precision to some extent. The observer may misinterpret events, may unwillingly ignore some important things that are very much relevant. He may focus on unimportant things and may become emotionally involved with the lives of the subjects.
5. Another disadvantage is that the findings of single observational study cannot be generalised to all apparently similar cases. The phenomenon that has been studied may have been an exceptional one. Hence its findings cannot be uncritically applied to parallel situations.
6. To become a participant observer one must at least share sufficient cultural background with the actors involved in the phenomenon under study. Only then he is able to construe their behaviour meaningfully. It would be pointless, for example, for him to attempt to study the behaviour of some quite unknown people merely by observation.
7. As it is in the case of the interviewer, the observer's role is conditioned by his age, sex and possibly by his caste, ethnic or racial status. A man will find much of the behaviour of women beyond his observation and vice versa. Similarly, a young researcher may find it virtually impossible to associate with the old in order to see what they do and what they talk about and vice versa.
8. As Horton and Hunt have pointed out this method of observation gives rise to some ethical questions also. It is ethical to pretend to be a loyal member of a group in order to study it? Is such a

deception justifiable? Is he sure, that his role as an observer does not harm the interest of the members of the group under study? The best answer though it is difficult to practice is that a reputable scientist will be careful not to injure the people being studied.

9. The eyewitness account of the participant observer has definitely its own limitations. Many of the happenings and events are beyond its purview. How do people behave after a disaster, say, an earthquake, or a bomb explosion? What happens at a religious revival, riot, or a famine? Rarely do we find a visiting sociologist with a pen in hand really to record the event.



The Relative Merits of Participant Observation

Participant Observation has certain advantages or merits also. Some of them may be pointed out here.

- (i) Since the observer is not a stranger but a known person, it is possible to observe the natural behaviour of the group;
- (ii) This type facilitates gathering quantitatively more and qualitatively better information about the people or events;
- (iii) It is also possible to get better insights into the inner dynamics of the phenomena since the observer happens to be an insider;
- (iv) Even the so called secret behaviour (relating to sex, crime, business tactics, etc.,) can be observed through this method;
- (v) The dependability of the data collected through this method is believed to be greater because it is gathered first-hand.

(ii) Non-Controlled Non-Participant Observation

The non-participant observation is difficult to conduct. We have no standard set of relationship or role patterns for the non-member who is always present but never participating. Both the group and the outsider are likely to feel uncomfortable. In many research situations, an outsider cannot become a genuine participant. The sociologist, for example, cannot become a criminal in order to study a criminal gang. Neither can he become a true member of the criminal gang.

On the other hand, it is possible for the observer to take part in many activities of the group so as to avoid the awkwardness of complete non-participation. This has been a classic pattern in social research. It was used by Leplay a century ago in his study of European working families. In such studies, the investigators have lived as members of the family as participants in community activities taking part in games and dances or even in study groups. They nevertheless made clear that their purpose was to gather facts.

Non-participant observation is usually quasi-participant observation. What is necessary here is a good plan for entering the group. If the observer is good at observation, then, he can establish good contact with the group members. Here, the observer is a stranger and hence is less involved emotionally with the social situation. True members of the group may thus feel relatively free to talk over even delicate matters which they would not discuss with their own inmates. The observer is also a good listener and is like a pupil eager to learn.

Merits and Demerits of Non-Participant Observation

Merits

- (i) This type contributes to a higher degree of objectivity on the part of the observer. There is no need for him to become emotionally involved in the event.
- (ii) Since the observer observes the events with an open mind he is able to collect more information.
- (iii) The people who are being observed can also be more free with the observer for he is an outsider.

Demerits

- (i) Observation in this category is mostly limited to formal occasions and Organisations. It fails to provide information regarding many aspects of our social life.
- (ii) Since the observer is an outsider he may fail to understand the behaviour of the observed in its entirety. The observer may not get insights into different aspects of behaviour.

Systematic Controlled Observation

Here the observer tries to systematize the process of observation and does not try to limit the activities of the observed individuals. This is most useful in exploratory studies. The observer makes use of the carefully drawn schedules and questionnaires and better techniques of observation. He tries to check his own biases, his selective perception, and the vagueness of his senses. He makes use of standardized instruments like camera, tape records, maps, sociometric scales etc. to record his observation with more precision.

The sociologist in this controlled observation is often in the position of a zoologist or a psychologist or an astronomer attempting to study the lives of animals or objects in their natural habitat. Hence it is difficult to control the object under investigation. Instead of that the observer must at least put controls on himself. By this he increases precision and at the same time he protects his work from later attacks.

Controlled observation may also be directed towards situations which are natural, but in which the subjects are aware that they are being observed. Systematic observation limits the bias of the individual observer partly by making the subjects feel the situation as natural and partly by the application of controls on the observer in the form of mechanical devices like films, photographs, recordings etc. Here, the controls are applied to both the observer and the observed.

Merits and Limitations of Observation

Merits of Observation

- (i) Observation, whether of participant or non-participant type, has, it is to be acknowledged, its own advantages. As Robertson has pointed out Observational studies have the advantage that they come to grips with real-life situations and so offer insights that years of experimenting and surveying might overlook .
- (ii) The great advantage of the observational study is that the research is accomplished b directly observing subject's behaviour, as opposed to a survey or an analysis of existing sources in which the researcher must rely of others observations and reports. Observational techniques are also greatly superior to either the survey or the document study in providing information about non verbal behaviour.
- (iii) Observational techniques allow the researcher to observe the subject in a natural setting, and they provide for the study of the subject over a time rather than at one point, as a survey usually does .
- (iv) Though there is the danger of an observer getting himself absorbed with the group under study, it has a peculiar strength of its own. As Peter Worsley points out,“ the peculiar strength of participant observation demands not complete detachment, but the involvement of the research worker in the lives of the people he is studying.... This gives him a deeper insight into the behaviour of the people he is studying .

Limitations of Observation

- (i) One of the limitations of observation is that the data collected through observation cannot always be quantified.
- (ii) Observation is essentially the study of occurrences at the time they occur. Hence it is very much limited by the duration of the event. Events do not wait for the conveniences of the observer.
- (iii) Observation cannot always be effectively used to study the private and secret behaviour of the individuals. For example, observing the criminal behaviour of a so called decent person , is not an easy task.
- (iv)There is no guarantee that the observer studies the phenomenon in an impartial manner and without prejudice. Hence, there is scope for the danger of bias, especially hidden bias.

Conclusion

Observation is one of the effective methods of collecting reliable information about the social behaviour of man though it has its own limitations. In this method the role of the observer is very significant. The effectiveness of the method depends to a great extent on the efficiency of the observer.

The observer is a mediator between the actual situation and the data. The researcher must keep in mind the role of the observer while making observations. All scientific study depends ultimately upon the observer, especially, in our field. The observer, however, is always a variable to be taken into account. In case of sociology, much information must be gathered before a genuine experiment can be designed and both participant and non-participant observation types are used for this purpose. We cannot do away with the influence of the observer, but we can limit it to a great extent.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires and schedules are very much used in gathering a variety of data. They have been used for the collection of personal preferences, social beliefs, attitudes, opinions, behaviour patterns, group practices, habits and other kinds of data. The increasing use of schedules and questionnaires is probably due to increased emphasis by social scientists on quantitative measurement of uniformly accumulated data.

A questionnaire is a tool for data collection. It consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or a set of forms. It is administered to a respondent either personally or through mail. The respondent answers the questions on his own without being aided.

Questionnaires are now widely used collecting data, particularly when data are to be collected from a large number of people who are scattered over a wide area. They are used both as independent and separate method of collecting data. They are also used as an additional device to check data gathered through observation and personal interview.

Definition of Questionnaire

1. "A questionnaire is a means of gathering information by having the respondents fill in answers to printed questions Wallace and Wallace.
2. Fundamentally, the questionnaire is a set of stimuli to which literate people are exposed in order to observe their verbal behaviour under these stimuli' Lundberg.
3. Good and Hatte define questionnaire as a device for securing answers to questions using a form which the respondent fills in himself.
4. Questionnaire studies are systematic ways of asking questions under scientific controls. A questionnaire is a device in which the respondents fill in their responses in specified manner personally.

Questionnaire, Schedule and the Interview Guide

The questionnaire is designed to collect data from large, diverse and widely scattered groups of people. The questionnaire is generally sent through the mail to the informants to be answered as specified in a covering letter and without further assistance from the sender. The schedule, on the other hand, is generally filled out by the researcher who can interpret questions when necessary.

Questionnaire. The word Questionnaire refers to a device for securing answers to questions by using a form which the respondent fills in himself.

Schedule or Interview Schedule. Schedule" or "interview schedule" is the name usually applied to a set of questions which are asked and filled in by an interviewer in a face-to-face situation with another person. In its form and content, a schedule is similar to the questionnaire. Like the questionnaire, it can be structured and unstructured. As in questionnaire, here also the wording of the questions is the same for all the respondents.

The main difference between the questionnaire and schedule is that the questionnaire is filled in by the respondent on his own, whereas the schedule is filled in by the interviewer.

Interview Guide

An interview guide' on the other hand, is a list of points or topics which the interviewer must cover during the interview. In this case, flexibility may be allowed as to the manner, order and language in which the interviewer asks the questions. The interview guides are also referred to "unstructured questionnaires." The interview guide permits the interviewer to ask a fresh question in order to make the previous answer more meaningful.

Ways of Obtaining Response through the Questionnaire Method

There are two ways through which the responses of the informants could be collected. Responses of the informants could be collected through questionnaire method (i) by mailing the questionnaires to the selected people under study, or (it) by asking the questions to them directly in an interview. Mailed questionnaires have some advantage over interviews, including saving money and time,

convenience to the respondents who can reply at will. There is greater assurance for them that the respondents will remain anonymous; and that questions will not be put in various tricky ways; and that the respondents are not biased by the interviewer. Further there is greater chance for the respondents to find time to consult other sources before responding. There is greater ease of access to the people who are widely separated geographically.

Types of Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be classified into two broad types:

- (i) Structured Questionnaires, and
- (ii) Unstructured Questionnaires.

(i) Structured Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires are those which pose definite, concrete and prepared questions. It means the questions are prepared in advance and not constructed on the spot during the questioning period. Additional questions may be used only when need arises to clarify vague or inadequate replies by informants. This structured questionnaire may be of two broad types:

- (a) Closed-Form or Poll Type or Selective Type Questionnaire, and
- (b) Open-End or Inventive Type Questionnaire.

(a) Closed-Form Questionnaire. In closed-form questionnaire, a number of alternative answers are provided at the end of each question and the task is, the informant has to choose one of them. This is also called Poll-Type or Selective-Type of questionnaire for the informant has to select one among the answers supplied by the investigator himself. His choice of giving his own answer is not permitted and hence it is a "closed-type". Example: Where do you wish to live in?

- (1) City, (2) Suburb, (3) Village?"

(b) Open-End Type or Inventive Type. In this type, questions are not followed by any readymade answers. The informant has to think of the answer himself and he is free to answer as he likes. The open-end responses are free and spontaneous expressions on the part of the informant who is not limited in his replies to a particular question posed to him. This is also called "inventive type" for the respondent has to think of or invent the answer for himself. The respondent may be asked to write a descriptive essay and express his viewpoints, describe his relationships, attitudes, indicate his problems, and report on details and events without restrictions imposed as in the type of closed questions. Structured questionnaires are used in a wide range of projects which may pertain to studies of economic or social problems, measurement of public opinion on public issues or events, studies of administrative policies, studies on cost of living, consumer expenditures, child welfare, public health and numerous other issues.

In the closed-form questions, the responses may be easily tabulated and statistical measures can be easily applied, because, the number of possible answers to each question is fixed. Its disadvantage is that it may often suggest answers that may not be there in the mind of the informant. This may defeat the very purpose of the study. Another defect is, the informant has to confine his answers to the points given in the questionnaire itself. He cannot go out of it and express his true opinion on a particular issue.

The merit of the open-end type is that it gives wide chance to the informant to give his own answer to the questions. He is not bound by rules and can be free. Its demerit is that it poses some problems of classification and analysis. But this open-end question has been employed successful where the primary information to be collected is qualitative in nature.

(ii) Unstructured Questionnaires

Unstructured questionnaires, frequently referred to as interview guides, also aim at precision and contain definite subject-matter areas. Flexibility is its main advantage. It is designed to obtain views, opinions, attitudes, and to show relationships and interconnections between data which might escape notice under more mechanical types of interrogation. The object is to give the respondent maximum opportunity to reveal how he had arrived at or developed his world of experience. Free responses of the respondents are solicited and no limitations are imposed and no predetermined responses are provided.

This form of questionnaire is used for intensive studies, but generally for a limited number of selected cases. It has been applied to studies of family group cohesiveness, to studies of personal experiences, beliefs and attitudes. The chief disadvantage of unstructured questionnaires stems from the danger that non additive and non comparable data will be accumulated when no structuring is imposed.

Formation or Construction of a Questionnaire

The effectiveness of questionnaire as a tool of obtaining information also depends on the construction or formation of a questionnaire. It is not an easy task to prepare a good questionnaire. Hence attention must be paid to the following aspects in preparing a questionnaire.

- 1. Physical Format.** The physical format of a good questionnaire must be such that it must evoke spontaneous interest from respondents.
- 2. Question Content.** Questions must be specific and unambiguous and seek responses on a definite topic.
- 3. Question Wording.** The wording of the questions and the language used must be simple, direct and unambiguous. Questions and key words carrying dual meaning must be avoided.
- 4. Question Sequence.** Questions in a questionnaire must be ordered in a definite sequence. In addition to these, the following suggestions may also be considered in preparing and using the questionnaire.

Main points to be Noted in Preparing and Using the Questionnaire

1. Any questionnaire must be limited in its length and scope. In interviews especially the questionnaire should not require more than 30 minutes to be completed.
2. When the questioner and the interviewee possess a more detailed experience with the subject of the inquiry, many questions become unnecessary and can be avoided.
3. The questioner should try to know as much as possible about his subject-matter before he begins to formulate questions.
4. Sufficient care should be taken to include all the important questions on the subject. Each and every item of the questionnaire must be relevant and related with central problem.
5. There must be logical connection between the questions and they can be thought of as moving from the inside to outward.
6. Care must be taken to avoid ambiguous, too personal and embarrassing questions.
7. Care must be taken to ask questions which include all the possible alternatives on a particular issue at study.
8. Wordings of the questionnaire should be simple, and unambiguous.
9. Likert's Scale [or Five Point Scale] can be made use of when yes or "no" answer cannot be even to a question. This includes five points or responses to a question among which one can be accepted by the respondent:
 - (i) I strongly approve.

- (ii) I approve.
- (iii) I am undecided.
- (iv) I disapprove.
- (v) I strongly disapprove.

10. Further, there must be a unity in the construction of a questionnaire or schedule. The questions should be so designed to awaken the interest of the respondent and must proceed from simplicity to complexity. Embarrassing questions should be avoided and the personal information should not be sought. The questions should proceed from one frame of reference to another instead of jumping back and forth.

Advantages and Limitation of Questionnaire

Advantages of Questionnaire

1. Questionnaire is relatively economical and inexpensive. It is possible to cover a large number of people scattered over a wide area.
2. This method saves time. Instead of meeting people personally it is possible to approach them in a larger number through the mailed questionnaire. Analysis and interpretation can be done quickly.
3. Questionnaire ensures anonymity. The respondent is free to express his views and opinions.
4. Questionnaire is said to be more suitable for eliciting information regarding some personal and private affairs such as sex habits, marital relations, etc., because of the anonymity that it maintains.
5. Questionnaire does not put much pressure on the respondent's emotionality. It provides sufficient leisure time to answer the questions in a relaxed mood.
6. In questionnaire, the collected answers can be processed and analyzed in a simpler and a faster manner. Uniformity of answers helps the standardization of the recording procedure.

Disadvantages and Limitations

1. Questionnaire method cannot be administered in the case of illiterate and uneducated persons.
2. Questionnaire is not suitable when a spontaneous answer is very much required.
3. There is no way of checking misinterpretations and unintelligible replies by the respondents.
4. Proportion of returns, especially of mailed questionnaire, can be very low, as low as 10%. This does not give a comprehensive picture of the situation.
5. In spite of their advantage questionnaires lack the flexibility of interviews. Generally, they have lower response rates, since it is easier for the respondents not to respond. They permit the measurement of verbal behaviour only, without allowing the researcher to make observations. Furthermore, mailed questionnaires enable the respondent to skip questions.

3. INTERVIEW

Interview is one of the important methods of collecting data in social research. Literally, interview means mutual view of each other. It is called a conversation with a purpose. But it is not a simple conversation or verbal exchange. Its objective is to exchange ideas, elicit information regarding a wide area in which the interviewee may wish to recollect the past, interpret the present and advocate his future course of action or plan.

An interview is a means of gathering information in which one person asks another either in person directly, or indirectly. Interview, is an effective, informal verbal or non-verbal conversation, initiated for specific purposes and focused on certain planned content areas.

Definition of Interview

- (i) According to **Young**, as the very term implies, interviewing is an interactional process .

(ii) According to **Gopal**, "The interview is conversation with a purpose and, therefore, is more than a mere oral exchange of information.

(iii) In general, it can be said that an interview is face-to-face verbal interchange in which one person, i.e., the interviewer, attempts to elicit some information or expressions of opinion from another person or persons regarding a particular issue.



Interview is Not Just Conversation

Interviewing is not a simple two-way conversation between an interrogator and informant. Gestures, glances, facial expressions, pauses often reveal subtle feelings. Voice, inflections and halting statement can be as much a part of the interplay between the conversing persons and their questions and answers." Much can be understood by means of verbal expressions and also from the use of sounds. Furthermore, not only reaction to a statement but also attitudes can be learned from a blush, nervous laugh, sudden palor or undue embarrassment. This behaviour is in itself important data for the interviewer.

The interaction that takes place in an interview is highly complex. A minute change of facial expression, a slight tensing of a muscle, the flick of an eye, a trace of a change in emphasis, a slight change in one's rate of speaking, one's choice of words, and other involuntary reactions that may not involve spoken words can be comprehended by a shrewd interviewer. Every interview has its own balance of revelation and of withholding of information.

Major Objectives of the Interview

The objective of an interviewer in any interview is to know the mind, opinion, attitudes and feelings of an interviewee with regard to a particular object or situation. The objectives of the interview may be exchange of ideas and experiences, eliciting of information pertaining to a wide range of data in which the interviewee may wish to rehearse his past, define his present and canvass his future possibilities. The task of the interviewer is to penetrate the outer and inner life of persons and groups.

As T.W. Adorno points out, it is the task of an interviewer to ascertain opinions, attitudes, and values that (are) on the surface .. ideological trends that (are) more or less, inhibited and reach the surface only in indirect manifestations; and explore personality forces in the subject's unconsciousness.

The Process of Interview

A systematic interview may consist of the following stages:

1. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer has to introduce himself to the interviewee in a very polite manner to win over his confidence.
2. The very nature and purpose of the interview must be made known to the interviewee so as to dispel the undesirable anxiety and tension.
3. The interviewer may ask some serious questions in the beginning and later on talk freely with the interviewee.
4. The interviewer may also assist the interviewee in eliciting information from him and must prompt here and there depending upon the need.
5. Questions must be put in a systematic manner and in a lucid language.
6. The interviewer must encourage the interviewee to talk freely and can jot down points during brief pauses.
7. The interview must not be closed suddenly and abruptly.
8. The interviewer must be very careful in writing the report. He must also make observations about the feelings, emotions, facial expressions, and gestures of the interviewee and must give due weightage for them.

Types of Interview

There are different classifications of interview on the basis of different criteria. Interviews may be classified in various ways - according to their function (diagnostic, treatment, research, sample interviews), or according to the number of persons participating (group or individual interviews) or length of contact (short or long contact) or type of approach (directive or non-directive, structured or unstructured). Types of interviews are based chiefly on the respective roles assumed in them by interviewer and interviewee. The following types of interviews may be noted.

- (i) The Non-Directive interview.
- (ii) The Directive Interview.
- (iii) The Focused Interview.
- (iv) The Repeated Interview.
- (v) The Depth Interview.

(i) The Non- Directive Interview or Unstructured Interview

This type of interview is also known as uncontrolled or unguided or unstructured interview. In this kind of interview, interviewer does not follow a system or list of predetermined questions, interviewees are encouraged to relate their concrete experiences with no or little direction from interviewer, to provide their own definitions of their social situations, report their own foci of attention, reveal their attitudes and opinions as they see fit.

The unstructured interview is much more flexible and open-ended . The researcher puts more general questions to the respondents, allows them to answer freely, and follows up on their comments. This approach allows the researcher to get insights that a structural interview may ignore.

Limitations. The unstructured interview has its own limitations. During a free-flowing interview, the non-directive interviewer at times is at a loss to know how actively he should participate during the

course of the discussion. As long as pertinent facts are being related and the informant shows no signs of lack of interest, the interviewer need only round out discussion by raising additional questions, if need be.

The unstructured interview approach has its other disadvantages. The answers are often extremely difficult to compare. If people are asked, for example, Do you intend to vote at the next parliamentary elections? , they will give such answers as - May be" " I might, if I feel like it", " Depends on who contests , I suppose so", "I have not decided yet" , and so on.

The researcher also has to be on guard against influencing the respondents' answers by such subtle signals as choice of words, tone of voice, and facial expressions. He has to put questions in straight forward and unemotional language which must be phrased in such a manner that all respondents will understand them in the same way. The question Are you religious"?- for example, is absurd, in the sense, it will be interpreted in different ways by different people. It is on the other hand, necessary to ask specific questions about - attending temples or churches, belief in rituals, God, and so on. Further, questions must be put in a very natural and neutral manner.

Unstructured interview essentially demands the training of the interviewer. A mere training in the social skill of keeping a conversation going on a topic which the respondent may not be very interested, is not sufficient. He must have the sensitivity to link the responses of his respondents to the theoretical topic that he is pursuing, wherever it is possible. This means unstructured interviews can only be carried out by people trained in sociological theory.

An Illustrative Example of Unstructured Interview

Elizabeth Bott s (Bott-1957) study of twenty London families can be cited here as a good example of unstructured interviewing. Bott was interested in the way in which husbands and wives divided the domestic tasks between themselves, and wanted to relate this division of labour to the structure of friendships the couple had with others. A structured interview could hardly be successful on a topic as delicate as this. Even if Bott were to resort to observation method, she would have had to combine herself solely to those families with whom she was able to live, and not with all the twenty families. On the average, Bott conducted 13 interviews with each family and each such interview lasted for more than 80 minutes. The interviews tended to be a friendly exchange of information rather than a matter of question and answer. Needless to say, a seasoned interviewer such as Bott was a great success in her study of those families.

(ii) The Directive Interview or Structured Interview

This interview uses a highly standardized technique and a set of predetermined questions. It is especially useful for administrative and market research of various types.

In a structured interview the researcher has a checklist of questions and puts them to the respondents in exactly the same form and exactly the same order. The respondent is asked to choose between several predetermined answers such as "Yes/no/don't know", or "very likely/likely/unlikely/very unlikely" . This type of interview is very inflexible.

Merits and Limitation

The structured interview method has its own merits. Since the interviewer follows a predetermined set of procedure there will be less scope for interference by the interviewer himself. By asking the predetermined questions he can maintain his objectivity. This will force the interviewer to confine himself to the topic only rather than asking about some irrelevant questions.

The main merit of the structured interview is that it helps the researcher to make careful tabulations and comparisons of the answers. If other information about the respondents is included, such as income, geographic location, or age, all these variables can be fed into a computer, and correlations between them can be extracted within seconds. The object of using structured interviews is to standardize the interviewer's personal approach or biases may have upon the results. If proper training is given to the interviewer it would further ensure the reliability and validity of the results.

The limitation of this interview is that, we cannot use this type of interview in all situations. Further, the questions that are used here may fail to elicit the real opinions of the informant.

(ii) The Focused Interview

This is differentiated from other types of interviews by the following characteristics.

(i) It takes place with persons known to have been involved in particular concrete situation. (These persons have seen a particular film, heard a particular broadcast, or have participated in a particular ceremony.)

(ii) It refers to situations which have been analyzed prior to the interview.

(iii) It proceeds on the basis of an interview guide which outlines the major areas of the inquiry and the hypotheses which locate pertinence of data to be secured in the interview.

(iv) It is focused on the subjective experiences-attitudes and emotional responses regarding the particular concrete situations under study.

In this type of interview the interviewee is given considerable freedom to express his definition of a situation that is presented to him. Therefore, focused interview is considered as semi-standardized.

The focused interview is based on the assumptions that through it, it is possible to secure precise details of personal reactions, specific emotions, definite mental associations provoked by a certain stimulus and the like. The focused interview is not being used as widely as its merits deserve probably because it requires extreme care in preparation and exceptionally sophisticated handling by skillful interviewers.

(iv) The Repeated Interview

This type of interview is particularly useful in attempts to trace the specific developments of social or psychological process (that is, the progressive actions, factors or attitudes which determine a given behaviour pattern or social situation).

Paul Lazarsfeld and his associates made extensive use of this repeated interview technique in their study of how the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign. These interviews secured the progressive reactions of the voter and also helped to know about the influence of various factors entering into the choice of a president.

The repeated interview technique is expensive in time and energy and money but it offers the advantage of studying the progressive actions and events as they actually occur.

The data secured through focuses as well as repeated interviews lend themselves to quantitative interpretation. Because, they are consistent and specific and aim at realisation of details which can be differentiated, tabulated and ultimately measured.

(v) The Depth Interview

This kind of interview aims to elicit unconscious as well as other types of material relating especially to personality dynamics and motivations. It is generally a lengthy procedure designed to encourage

free expression of information charged with emotions. It may be used along with special devices such as free association and projective techniques. When used carefully by an interviewer having specialized training the depth interview can reveal important aspects of psycho-social relations which are otherwise not readily available. Unless the researcher has specialized training, it is better not to attempt depth interviewing.

Crucial Points in the Interview

There are certain critical points which need special attention in interviewing:

1. The appearances of the interviewer must not be too strange or remote. He must dress and try to act in a similar way with that of the other people.
2. He must establish a good rapport with the interviewees and try to be friendly with them.
3. He must not impose his own will on the interviewees to get information since the interviewed has the right to deny giving answers.
4. Interviewer must, as far as possible, avoid arguments, insults and ambiguous and confusing terms. Double-barreled questions such as "Do you think that mercy-killing and corporal punishment should be legalized?" - necessarily create confusions in the minds of the respondents. Because, people may have different opinions about two subjects.
5. Questions must not be asked immediately about the subject in which the interviewer is interested.
6. He must take down the responses of the respondents without approval or disapproval.
7. The interviewer must have patience to hear the interviewee.
8. If the interviewer wants to get the personal views of opinions of the interviewee, then he must assure him that his expressed views will be kept in secret.
9. The interviewer must understand that his object is to elicit the opinions of the interviewee and not to exhibit his intelligence or shrewdness.
10. The interviewer who conducts the interview will be benefited if he himself goes through an interview with others who are good in interviewing.

Advantages and Limitations of Interview

Advantages

1. Through interview it is possible to secure relatively dependable information about issues, peoples and events.
2. Interview may help us to obtain in-depth knowledge of social issues.
3. It is possible to secure information about the past, present and also about future course or plans in somewhat a detailed manner.
4. The active and intelligent role of the interviewer can add to the high rate of response.
5. The interview method can be used to obtain information from almost all types of persons.

Disadvantages and Limitations

1. Many disadvantages of this method arise due to the incapability of the interviewer.
2. Prejudices or bias developed knowingly or unknowingly by the interviewer may completely mislead the outcome of interview.
3. The interviewer may fail to select a "right , " person (due to defective sampling procedure) to obtain information.
4. Possibilities of the interviewer and the interviewee having diverging, often antagonistic, views and outlook cannot be overlooked. This situation may create confusion in the course of the interview or it may spoil its outcome.
5. Interviewing is a difficult skill and it needs an intense and time-consuming training.

6. Interview by itself is incomplete and needs to be supplemented with other methods such as observation.
7. There is no guarantee that the interviewee gives his honest opinions on the issues referred to him. Hence his information may mislead the outcome of the interview.
8. One major danger with interview is that when people are asked to report on their own behaviour they may tend merely to mention the formal rules of social behaviour, rather than recount exactly how they actually behave. Bott found this in her study. She knew that one woman held strong views about the desirability of easy divorce. Yet in a meeting of women's association, the same woman spoke out against easy divorce. This she did, probably because she felt it necessary to stress the respectable norm of the sanctity of marriage even though her personal, or private opinions were just contrary to that. The same thing can happen in interviews also. Particularly in face-to-face interviews, respondents may give false information. People may deny their racist views or caste mindedness or communal bias, because, they know that these views are not respectable .

4. THE SOCIAL SURVEYS

The social survey technique seems to be very popular in sociology. In fact, the man in the street particularly associates the social survey with sociologists. This he does, probably because, this he thinks to be the only available technique that sociologists have for collecting information. This is especially so in the Western context. The social survey is certainly a very important way of assembling data, but it is by no means the only way.

Meaning and Definition

1. **Duncan Mitchell's** "Dictionary of Sociology" defines social survey this way : " The social survey is a systematic collection of facts about people living in a specific geographic, cultural, or administrative area" .
2. **Bogardus.** "A social survey is the collection of data concerning the living and working conditions, broadly speaking, of the people, in a given community" .
3. **Ian Robertson.** "Surveys are frequently used in sociological research, either simply for the purpose of gathering facts (such as the political opinions of college students,) or for finding out about the relationship between facts (such as how sex, parental opinions, or social class, influence students' political views)"
4. **E.W. Burgess.** " A social survey of a community is the scientific study of its conditions and needs for the purpose of presenting a constructive programme of social advance"

Social surveys are usually for dealing with many related aspects of a social problem. They provide the data for administration, rather than for the illustrative or descriptive material. They are generally quantitative and the history of the social survey is intimately bound up with the development of statistics.

The early ancestors of the social survey are the Doomsday Book, 'Slow s Survey of London,' Camden's Britannia,' the essays of 17th and 18th Century demographers, Arthur Young's reports to the Board of Agriculture, and the two Statistical Accounts of Scotland.

The modern social survey is said to be the product of the intellectual response of the urban middle classes to the social condition of town life in the 19th Century. In the modern period, three kinds of social surveys are often differentiated : (a) The Poverty Survey (originating in the work of Booth, Rowntree and Bowley, (b) The Ecological Survey (developed by Ratzel, Redus, Le Play and the Geddes; and (c) The Functional Study of the city (stemmed out of the works of Sherwell, the Chicago School, the Lynds, Warner and Lunt and Others).

The Procedural Ways of Social Survey

The social survey method has the ultimate goal of seeking social facts. It normally involves the following steps: Enunciating the object or purpose of the survey; definition of the problem under study; the delimitation of the area or scope of study; examination of the available evidences or sources relating to the problem; preparation of questionnaire schedule; field work to collect data; arrangement, tabulation and statistical analysis of the data; interpretation of results; deduction and graphic expression.

The social survey is concerned with the collection of data relating to some problems of great social importance with a view to find out an effective solution for it. The survey is normally limited to a fixed geographic area or confined to a defined population. The basic procedure is that people are asked a number of questions focused on that aspect of behaviour in which the sociologist is interested. The focal point could be students' participation in politics, or "Opinions of highly educated scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people regarding reservation", or "Ayodhya Problem" or any such topic or issue of social interest.

The total group of people whose attitudes, opinions or behaviour, the sociologist is interested in, is called the "population". The people are carefully selected so that they become representative of the population being studied. They are asked to answer exactly the same questions, so that the replies of different categories of respondents, may be examined for differences. In some cases, it is possible to survey the entire population, but time and expense make their procedure impracticable unless the population is a small one and confined to limited area. In most cases it is necessary to survey a sample, a small number of individuals drawn from the larger population. This type of survey is often called "sample survey". The sample must exactly represent the population in question. If it does not, then any conclusions are valid only for the actual people who were surveyed (that is, the respondents) and cannot be applied to the entire population from which the sample was drawn.

One of the major virtues of the survey is that a large number of respondents can be included in it. For the very same reason both the method of getting the questionnaires completed, and the formulation of the questions to be asked, must be very carefully worked out.

Survey can be Conducted in Various Ways

1. One type of survey lies on contacting the respondents by letter and asking them to complete the questionnaires themselves before returning it.
2. Another variation in the procedure is that, an assistant of the surveyor delivers the questionnaires to the respondents, requests them to complete it, and makes an arrangement to pick them up later.
3. Sometimes questionnaires are not completed by individuals separately but by people in a group under the direct supervision of the research worker. For example, a class of students in a college or a group of women at a meeting of the Mahila Samaj and so on, may be asked to respond to the questionnaire together.
4. In some other surveys a trained interviewer asks the questions and records the responses on a schedule for each respondent. It should be noted, these alternative procedures have different strengths and weaknesses.

Social surveys, as it is clear from the above, may depend either on questionnaires which are self-administered, or on schedules which are completed by trained interviewers, or by the research worker personally. Social surveys involves same amount of home work or office work. For example,

schedules must be prepared with sample identifications (example, the addresses of houses or firms). If a mail questionnaire is to be used, the envelopes have to be addressed, stamped and posted. If the enquiry is based on interviews, the interviewers will have to be very carefully briefed. When the schedules are completed and returned they are processed in such a manner that they could be provided for computer analysis.

Some Main Forms of Social Surveys

Depending upon the purpose and the nature of study, social surveys assume different forms, Some form of social surveys are as follows : (i) Official, semi-official or private surveys,(ii) widespread or limited surveys ; (iii) census survey or sample surveys,(iv) general or specialized surveys; (v) postal or personal surveys,(vi) public or confidential surveys ; (vii) initial or repetitive surveys; (viii) regional or adhoc surveys, etc.

Controversies Relating to Social Surveys

Though social surveys provide very useful information about our social life, its intricacies and problems, there has been a good deal of controversy about (1) The reliability and validity of results obtained from social surveys.(2) Another objection is regarding the extent to which individual characteristics may be assumed to relate to social properties. (3) Yet another doubt is concerning the validity of the replies to questions which are obtained in social surveys.

Though these objections have an element of truth in them, sociologists are trying their level best to make social surveys free from these controversies. They use different means to collect data to suit the sort of information they require for their study. While mail-questionnaires are perfectly alright to collect information relating to some straightforward topics, other topics may require the help of an expert interviewer.

Sample Surveys and the Random Sample

Most of the sociological surveys are sample surveys. A sample survey is a systematic means of gathering data on people s behaviour, attitudes, or opinions by questioning a representative group'- (N.J.Smelser). It has three basic units : elements, a population, and a sample.

(i) **Elements** are units of analysis., These units are mostly people. They can also be households, castes, cities or even societies.

(ii) **Population.** The elements in a survey constitute the population . They could be, for example, all the members of a particular caste or cult, all the registered voters of a university senate etc.

(iii) **Sample.** A sample is any portion of a population. But this sample is expected to be representative of the population. It means, it should precisely represent or reflect its elements. In fact, it is designed to be a precise reflection of population Sampling is an important aspect of social survey. Sampling, that is, selection of the relevant units of inquiry for the collection of data, must be done in a scientific manner. To ensure that the units he selects really reflect the characteristics of the population, the researcher may resort to different devices such as quota sampling or random sampling .

The Random Sample

Is a sample, the real representative of the total population ? Whether its size has anything to do with its representative character ? These are pertinent questions in the sample survey. The answer is equally simple. A sample could be more approximately representative even if its size is very small. For example, in a nation like India, a representative sample of 10,000 people could be used to predict the outcome of the parliamentary elections. The standard method of ensuring that the sample is

representative is to make a random selection of subjects from the population concerned. This selection has to be done in such a way that every member of the population should get an equal chance of being selected.

Thus, a random sample is one that is chosen in such a way that every element (or every combination of elements) in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample.

In this particular context, random does not mean "haphazard". On the other hand, it denotes equal probability of occurrence. The process of creating a random sample usually begins with a complete listing of the population. For example, student's attendance register lists the undergraduate population of a college. Next all the names in the list are numbered. The sample is then selected from this list, say every 10th or 15th person from the population would be selected.

Another method of obtaining a random sample is to assign a number to each member of the population and then to select the sample by using random numbers produced by a computer. This method seems to be more reliable because it eliminates most sources of human error.

The basic features of random sampling are straightforward, but random sampling is not often in sociological research. The main reason for this is that adequate population lists (such as, the list of all the higher educated scheduled tribe and scheduled caste people, or the list of all the divorced persons etc.) are not always available. Further, many projects study populations for which there is no list or directory in existence. (For example, the reliable list of households that possess television in India is not available.) It might be possible to make lists of such populations, but this would probably require more work than the study itself.

Where population lists do exist, they must be used with great care because they may be biased towards certain portions of the population. A list of doctors, for example, may include only registered medical practitioners, and it naturally excludes relatively good number of traditional medical practitioners including even some Ayurvedic doctors and Homeopathic doctors.

Other Kinds of Sample

The random sample has served as a good model for designing other models of sampling. Some of them can be mentioned here.

1. Systematic (Pseudo-random) Sample. The ratio of sample size to population size (say, 1 to 15) is used to derive an interval (K). Then every Kth element in a population is included in the sample. For example, every 15th student who registers himself or herself in the college office and who is regularly attending the classes might be included in the sample.

2. Stratified Sample. This mode entails dividing the population into segments or strata, and then sampling within each stratum. This technique ensures that the different segments or strata will be represented in the sample in precisely the same proportion as they occur in the population. For example, if in the category of scheduled castes higher educated people constitute 10%, then, they will constitute 10% of the sample.

3. Cluster Sample. This mode entails grouping elements of a population into geographic units. **For example,** student population of a University Campus could be sampled in clusters based on the different hostels in which they stay.

Sampling has been used for a considerable period of time. But controlled methods of sampling started in social research only in the beginning of this century. In England and Wales, Professor A.L. Bowley

was one of the first investigators to use sampling methods in his five town-surveys. These he did before the First World War. Afterwards, sampling methods have been applied in many branches of social investigation, in public opinion surveys, the assessment of social mobility, in the study of performances in intelligence tests, and so on. Sampling Techniques are being used by the official statisticians also.

5. OTHER METHODS

(i) Sociometry

“Sociometry is one of the techniques of social research in sciences such as psychology, sociology, and so on. The term was coined by Jacob L. Moreno, an Austrian psychiatrist who migrated to the United States of America. Being in charge of a refugee camp as an administrator soon after the First World War, he took interest to develop techniques to find out the ways in which people group themselves according to their own choices. He developed this as a small group therapeutic and research techniques.

Sociometry refers to a set of techniques to measure in quantitative and diagrammatic terms attractions and repulsions in interpersonal relations.

The practice of sociometry consists of the administration of a questionnaire in which the subject chooses five other people in rank order of their attractiveness as associates, either general or in relation to some specific activity. It was later extended to cover negative choices. The results are plotted on paper in diagrammatic form hence the term sociogram.

The technique of sociometry is a very simple one and is applicable for the study of small group structures, personality traits and social status. It gives an insight relating to the feelings people have for one another and provides various indexes or measures of interaction. Within its limitation it has been found to be very useful. It can be particularly helpful in the assignment of personnel to work groups in such a way as to achieve a maximum of interpersonal harmony and a minimum of interpersonal friction.

Moreno's original exposition of this technique is found in his book *Who Shall Survive* 1934, and in the journal he founded, called “Sociometry”. But Moreno himself does not appear to have used this technique much in small group experimental investigations. His theoretical approach seems to be very vague and too general. In spite of that, good number of other people, engaged in research have made use of this approach (including Helen H. Jennings who used it in detailed studies of women in correctional institutions in America).

Sociometry aroused considerable interest because once it has been decided what is implied in interpersonal choices recorded in this manner it is possible to present the results quantitatively. This technique is, in a sense, a combination of ideal type analysis and statistics. Though in the beginning psychologists were more attracted by this technique, in course of time, the sociologists also got enthused with it particularly to study the different dimensions of interpersonal relations. The technique is now found to be simple, reliable and more useful in the study of interpersonal relations.

(ii) The Experimental Method

All sciences use experiments. The experimental method provides a reliable way of studying the relationship between two variables under carefully controlled conditions. Experiments can be conducted either in the laboratory or in the field. It means the experiment method is of two types (a) Laboratory experiments, and (b) Field experiments.

(a) Laboratory Experiments. In a laboratory experiment the people and any necessary materials are brought into an artificial experiment that can be carefully regulated by a researcher. In laboratory experiments with people, people are recruited, assembled, and sometimes even paid for engaging in the experiment. This type of experiment is more appropriate when the researcher wants to control the situation in minute detail.

(b) Field Experiment. The field experiment takes research out to people instead of bringing people to the research laboratory. It takes place outside the laboratory under somewhat less artificial conditions, say in a prison, hospital, college, or factory. The field experiment is more suitable when the researcher wants to minimize the possibility that people will change their typical behaviour in the artificial laboratory experiment.

The Ways of Experimental Method

The concept of any experiment is very simple. The researcher has to hold all variables constant, except one, has to vary it and see what happens. In a typical experiment, an independent variable is introduced into a carefully designed situation and its influence on a dependent variable is recorded. This can be illustrated with the help of an example.

Example. Let us say, the researcher is interested in the effects of communal integration in schools on Muslim students' attitudes and decides to run a small experiment on the subject. The researcher must first measure the Muslim students' attitudes, then introduce Hindu and Christian students into the class, and then, after a suitable period, measure the Muslim students' attitudes again to find out whether any change has taken place. But actually this procedure is not sufficient to establish a causal link between the two variables. Any changes in the students' attitudes might have been caused by the coincidental factors say, communal disturbances in the neighbourhood or probably, a mass media campaign against communal disharmony that happened to take place while the experiment was in progress.

The researcher therefore, has to control the situation in such a way that other possible influences can be discounted. The standard method of doing this would be to divide the Muslim students into two groups whose members are similar in all relevant aspects. Both groups are then tested on their communal attitudes, but only one group called the experimental group, is exposed to classroom integration. The other groups called, the control group, are not subjected to this variable, but its experience is the same in all other respects. Finally, both groups are again tested on their communal attitudes, and any difference between the groups is assumed to be the result of the independent Variable.

The "Hawthorne Effects"

The experimental method cannot be easily administered in the sociological field. It involves some subtle problems. Controlling the situation is not always easier. The researcher is dealing with people who have their mind, thinking, feeling and their own ways of reacting. One of the best known experiments in sociology known as The Hawthorne Experiment, too had recorded some of the problems of experiment.

Elton Mayo and his associates had conducted an experiment before World War II at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company. The management was anxious to improve productivity and wanted to know what kind of incentives would encourage the workers to increase output. Researcher Mayo separated a group of women from the other workers and started varying the conditions systematically to find out how the changes would influence productivity. Each change that was

introduced, say providing for better lighting, coffee breaks, lunch hours, new methods of payment, etc., contributed to an improvement in the productivity. With each change, production rose. Mayo and his associates were delighted in the beginning. When they found that productivity rose no matter which Variables were involved, they became suspicious. Finally, the researchers returned the group to their original conditions and production rose to even greater heights.

The experiment revealed that, something was seriously wrong with the researchers' assumptions. Whatever had caused the change in the dependent Variable, that is, productivity, it was not the independent Variables that the experimenters had introduced. Actually, from this point of view, the experiment was a failure. But the reasons for the experiment's failure have taught sociologists a great deal. It appears that production rose because the women enjoyed all the attention they were getting. They had formed a close-knit primary group highly co-operative in nature. They had established their own norms for productivity ; they knew what effects the sociologists were trying to produce and they had decided to co-operate with them to increase the output. They did their best to please the sociologists. This phenomenon i.e. contamination of the experiment by the subjects' assumptions about what the sociologist is attempting to prove-is still known as the Hawthorne effect .The Hawthorne effect reveals one main limitation of the experimental method, when people realize that they are experimental subjects, they begin to act differently and the experiment may be spoiled.

Planned experiments upon human beings are most reliable when these subjects do not know the true object of the experiment. They may be given a rationale, a reasonable explanation of what the experiment is doing. This rationale may be a harmless one but it is a necessary deception which conceals the true purpose of the experiment. As Kelman points out, the use of deception in social research poses the ethical question of distinguishing between harmless deception and intellectual dishonesty, and it may even produce errors in the outcome-(subjects may detect the deception and may begin to act intelligently).

The experimental method has a few other disadvantages also. It can be used only for very narrowly defined issues. Further people may behave very differently in the artificial experimental situation, than they would, in the normal situations. Experimenters, may, sometimes, unwittingly produce the effect that they are looking for.

Because of all these limitations, social sciences, excepting of course, psychology, make limited use of planned experiments. We still use them wherever practical. We cannot completely do away with it. It allows the sociologist to investigate specific topics that often cannot be systematically examined under everyday conditions where so many other influences might conceal or distort the processes involved. Though sociologists often make use of this method, they depend more heavily on other techniques.

(iii) The Verstehen Approach (The Method of Understanding)

The Verstehen approach is often used in sociological researches. The German word Verstehen means understanding or comprehension of sociological issues or problems. German sociologist Max Weber developed this method, or approach.

Weber believed that sociology must model itself as far as possible on the natural sciences. Since the subject-matter of sociology is vitally different from those of other sciences it calls for an interpretative, subjective approach. This subjective interpretation Weber called Verstehen or “ sympathetic understanding . But it is in no sense a substitute for the scientific method. Wherever

possible, the conclusions drawn from subjective interpretation must be verified by the scientific method.

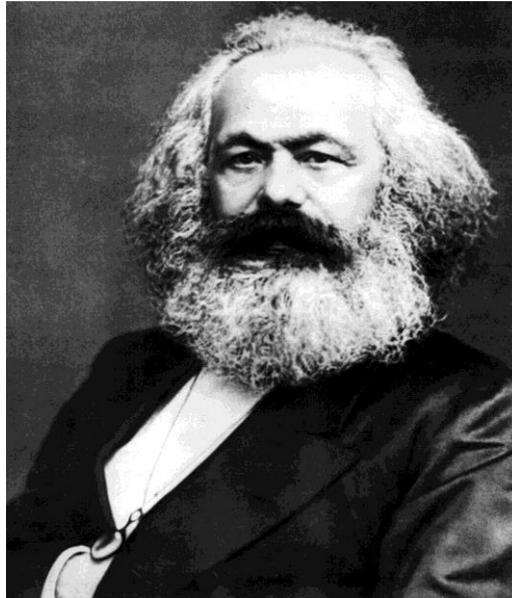
The advocates of this method have maintained that the observed facts are of little significance unless they are evaluated through discovery of their inner meaning. The intuitive understanding of social behaviour as insisted upon by this method, has its own importance. Weber himself used *Verstehen* in his famous study of “the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”. He used this method when he was trying to prove causal link between the beliefs of early Puritans and the development of capitalism. Weber believed that the Puritan Ethic (or the Protest Ethic) was more favourable for the development of Capitalism than the ethics of other religions such as Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, or even Hinduism. Because of the intrinsic support given by the Puritan Ethic, the Protestants accumulated and reinvested wealth instead of immediately spending it, as others were prone to do. By this, they unintentionally created modern capitalism. This argument of Weber, seems plausible, but there is no way to prove it scientifically because we cannot know whether the Puritans really did experience the so called “salvation panic”. Weber’s method was to put himself in the place of Puritan’s shoes in order to understand their real feelings and motives. Thus, as **Ian Robertson** has pointed out, “By combining his subjective interpretations of Puritan psychology with a rigorous analysis of the development of capitalism, he enhanced the richness (but not necessarily there liability) of his study”.

It is clear from the above that the nature of this approach is that it can be used only by such persons who have a greater capacity of comprehensions and a high level of intelligence and education. It may yield better results if it is used along with the scientific method.

SOCIOLOGICAL THINKERS

IAS GURUKUL

KARL MARX



Karl Marx (1818 - 1883)

Karl Marx was one of the early pioneers of the discipline of Sociology. He laid the foundation of conflict perspective in Sociology, which was radically different from the then prevailing structural-functional view. Although conflict theories came under severe criticism during the 19th Century because of their radical nature, his contribution to Sociology in terms of theories, concepts, methods and perspectives is unmatched as he provided an alternative narrative which has endured the test of times even today.

He wrote in a background when industrialization and capitalism were in full swing and Europe was witnessing post-French revolution changes. Changes in Europe were too profound and social environment was in a huge flux. It prompted Marx to give a thought about the misery and suffering of the people whom he saw as victims of the new economic order called capitalism. Inequality among the social classes prompted Marx to put forward a theory about the current state in capitalism and its origin in history.

Historical Materialism

Historical Materialism or the Materialistic Conception of History is the pivot to all the works of Marx. Its clearest exposition is done in his Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859. It is a conception of society in terms of evolutions from one stage to another, which Marx refers to as modes of production, and material or economic factors have a pivotal role in historical change. It is an inquiry into nature of relations between man and man and man and things, as history proceeds.

His theory is called historical because analysis of society is in terms of evolution from one state to another, as the time passes and history is made. According to Marx, History is a process of man's self creation. Since mans involvement into relations of production creates history, it is necessary to understand history to understand society. It is called materialistic for two reasons, firstly, his conception of society is based upon materialistic and not metaphysical factors which are understood

in terms of material production, Secondly, understanding of change is based upon changing material conditions and not ideas.

Further, his theory of historical materialism has two aspects -

I. His materialistic conception of society is in terms of economic infrastructure and social superstructure which are two conceptual entities, created by Marx to understand the modes of production or society.

II. He understands the historical evolution process in terms of a dialectic process, where two opposing forces interact with each other and new structures are produced and the dialectic process continues.

Marx borrowed idea of Historical or Dialectical Materialism from the Hegelian notions of Dialectical Idealism, but Marx felt that Hegel's idealism led to a very conservative political orientation, and Ludwig Feuerbach's a Young Hegelian notion of Materialism is more relevant. Thus, he retained the dialectical approach of Hegel, but replaced the idealism with Feuerbach's materialism. Marx believed that, material sources and conditions and not ideas per se are important in the working of any mode of production. Material world is characterized by its own independent existence and is not a result of human thinking.

Marx was also influenced by political economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo who had postulated that labour was the source of all wealth. Marx was also influenced by the political economists' depiction of the horrors of the capitalist system and the exploitation of the workers, but he didn't deem such evils as inevitable as he saw their solution in communism.

'In order to survive, man must produce' proclaimed Marx. Production is essential for the survival of human beings. It is the first historical act and had been universally a part of human history throughout. While going for production, man enters into relationships with other men. It is the fundamental aspect of history. Man produces to satisfy his needs which are ever growing and according to Marx - Man is a perpetually dissatisfied animal. Once a set of needs is satisfied, new ones are created. Thus, production continues and history proceeds. In order to produce, man must enter into relations with others. Apart from relations, some forces of production are also required which include tools, techniques, skills, etc.

PRAXIS

It literally means practical as against mere theory. David Harvey defines it as practical reflective activity. Critical theorists often argue for the use of praxis against theory in search of practical solutions to social problems. This concept in Sociology was initially put forward by Marx and it has two closely related meanings. First, it suggests action as opposed to philosophical speculation (it, thus, forms the basis of dialectic materialism). Secondly, it implies that the fundamental characteristic of human society is material production against idealism - to meet the basic needs. Man primarily acts on the natural world, i.e., he works and only secondarily thinks about it. In terms of Marx idea of social change, it also implies that it is not enough to understand the world. We must also try to improve it by real actions.

Relations of Production or social relations of production, according to Marx, are of two types in any mode of production -

I. Relations between man and man They pertain to the associations which individuals form in order to undertake production. These associations also lead to stratification and formulation of classes depending upon different positions in the production process. Broadly, there are two classes the haves, who own the production and earn profit or benefits, and the have nots, who don't have any real control on their labour in any mode of production and they have to sell their labour and earn wages in an industrial society. Nature of these relations is in the form of antagonistic cooperation, i.e., the two groups have opposite interests, but they still come together for production. According to Marx, the have nots are in a disadvantaged position and are forced to accept this state of antagonistic cooperation. This further accentuates the essential contradiction between the interests of the two classes.

II. Relations between man and things- They are of the nature of ownership and non-ownership of things required in the production. The haves control the production process in every mode of production, whereas the have nots are non-owners in the production process and just own their labour. Man is free to sell his labour in an industrial society. Similarly, in other societies or mode of productions, ownership and non-ownership relations exist.

According to Marx, these relations are dynamic. Antagonism keeps increasing, resulting into conflict between the two classes. Similarly, the relationship between man and things also keeps changing. In a capitalist society, Marx foresees such a degree of exploitation that the man loses control over his own labour also. According to Marx, these social relationships determine the existence of man and not his own will. According to Marx - 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousnesses i.e., men themselves don't decide what type of social relations (in production process) they will have, rather, social relations determine who they will be the ruled or the ruler, i.e., material conditions also shape the mental conditions of human beings. Men are not driven by their inner voices as these voices are subdued by the material consideration and the social relations created by these dominant material relations.

Forces of Production, according to Marx, have two aspects which are men and things. Men are further categorised into the haves and the have nots. Things include tools, techniques, equipments, skills, etc. Major changes in society occur when new forces of production are evolved (which also create new relations of production) which replace the older ones and create a new mode of production. A contradiction between the older and newer forces of production is resolved by the replacement of older mode of production by the newer one. In every society, there is centrality of one major thing. For example, in feudal society, land is central, in capitalist society, capital is central. Forces of production help in transforming the things which are available in nature into things which can be exchanged in market. Forces of production also represent man's control over nature. As the history proceeds, man's control over nature increases. Thus, man and nature are also in a state of constant struggle and the development in the forces of production can be seen in terms of man's increasing control over nature.

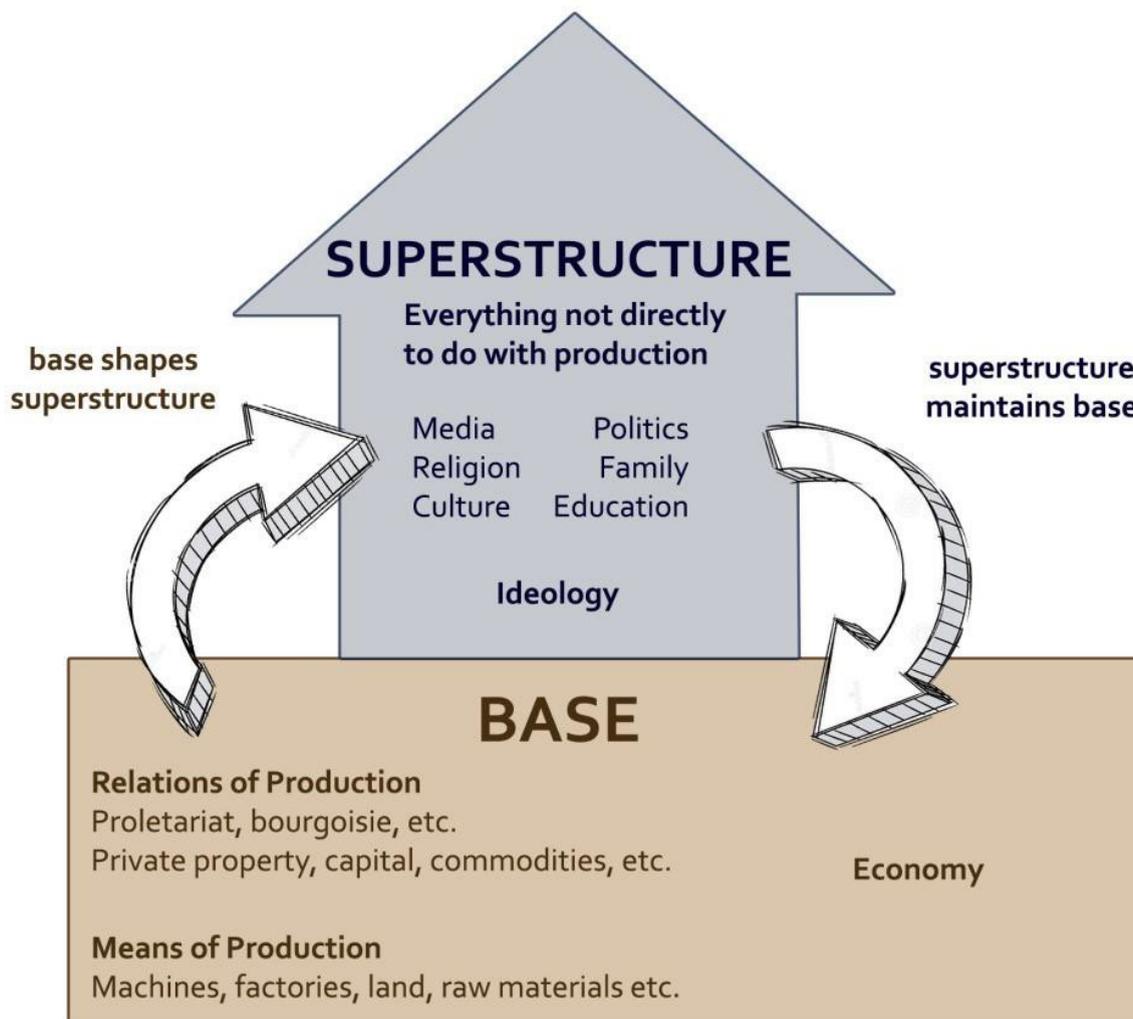
Both the forces and relations of production change continuously and together the two constitute economic base or economic infrastructure or simply the infrastructure of society. This constant

interplay results into a particular type of social formation or social state, which is called **mode of production**

Marx had a systemic view of society and he deemed production as central in understanding the society. The forces and relations of production continuously interplay and influence each other. According to his systemic view, society or mode of production consists of two parts -

I. Economic Base - It includes forces and relations, i.e., men and things being involved in production include classes, tools, techniques, etc. It represents the centrality of material or economic factors in shaping the whole mode of production.

II. Social Superstructure- It includes all other aspects of society like-culture, law, state, family, religion and education and it is largely shaped by economic infrastructure. As economic infrastructure changes, social superstructure also changes.



Relationship between Base & Superstructure in Marxist thought

Economic infrastructure shapes social superstructure which in turns helps in the functioning of economic infrastructure. Thus, nature of forces and relations of production will result in similar

superstructure and consequently, a typical organisation of society will emerge which is called as mode of production.

A major contradiction in any production activity is that there is a conflict between forces and relations of production. There is a conflict of interest between the various social groups in the relations of production as forces of production are unequally controlled by such groups. For example, in capitalist production, forces of production include collective production by a large number of workers, yet they are privately controlled by the capitalists. Contradiction is that while production is collective or social in nature, control over forces is private as a handful of capitalists have the actual control over these forces. Further, the fruit of these forces is also appropriated unequally by the capitalists.

Marx is criticized on the following grounds regarding his materialistic conception of history -

I. He is criticised as being reductionist for over-emphasising on material factors. He reduces the importance of all other factors in society into merely economic factors. Karl Popper termed his approach as economic reductionism for ignoring ideas.

II. Marx also over emphasised conflict and ignored social order aspect. Simmel even went on to say that conflict also has its own functions.

III. Conflict is attributed to relations within economic infrastructure, but Dahrendorf says differential authority structure is the root cause of conflict.

IV. Marx focused primarily on macro evolutionary aspect and ignored the micro reality of social life which was explored by non-positivist tradition.

ALIENATION

The concept alienation describes the estrangement of individuals from one another, or from a specific situation or process. It is central to the writings of Karl Marx and normally associated with Marxist sociology. There are philosophical, sociological and psychological dimensions to the argument. Hegel provided the philosophical means to overcome the Kantian dualism of

'is' and 'ought' since for Hegel, the actual was always striving to become the ideal. The passage of self-creating, self-knowing idea through history, its alienation through externalization and objectification and its reappropriation through knowledge, provided Marx with his revolutionary imperative. Turning Hegel on his head and rooting his own ideas in a "materialist vision, Marx argued that humanity is lost in the unfolding historical epochs. Thus Marx argued that with the advent of communism, there would be a complete return of individuals to themselves as social beings.

Sociological dimension of the term relates more to his argument that estrangement is a consequence of social structures which oppress people, denying them their essential humanity.

De-Humanisation of Labour

We will now outline how labour is 'de-humanized' in the process of production

a) Theory of Surplus Value

Following Adam Smith, Marx distinguished in a commodity, two aspects: they have a use-value and an exchange value. A commodity is an article, which can satisfy one or the other human need, is a use value. But a commodity is not just a useful article, which is to be produced and sold in the market, but to be exchanged with other commodities. How to measure the exchange- value of commodities which have different use-values? What do wheat and linen have in common? One is produced by a peasant, other by a weaver. They are the products of different types of useful labour. What they have in common is that they are both products of human labour in general, what Marx calls “abstract human labour”. On both products a certain amount of human labour has been spent. That determines their exchange-value. The exchange-value or simply the value, as distinguished from the use-value, consists of the abstract labour incorporated in the commodity. The measure is not the time which the individual labourer may have spent which may be above or below average, but the average time needed on a given level of productivity, what Marx calls the “socially necessary labour-time”.

Marx's Work Ethic

According to Marx, work should be the expression of man and his creativity. Work should be one which he loves and enjoys doing it. Capitalist mode of production has distorted the meaning and nature of work. Work ceases to be an expression and becomes a yoke under which the labourer groans. The human being (the subject) is treated lower or valued lower than the commodity (object) that he himself would contribute to what is called as objectification. In a capitalist society, the wealth generated by the mode of production is appropriated by one class i.e. owners of land and capital. Thus as capitalism progresses, the devaluation of the worker also increases. This leads to objectification, where the worker gets assimilated to the product (object) and consequently loses his own identity.

Capitalist production becomes possible when along with other commodities labour-power can be bought as a commodity. As any other commodity labour- power has a use-value for the buyer and an exchange-value for the seller. For the buyer, (the capitalist), it has the use-value that it can work (produce). He uses, he consumes it for this purpose and pays the price — strange enough only afterwards – in the form of wages. For the worker his labour power has only an exchange value. He cannot use it for his own purposes, because he has no means of production. But he can sell it in order to make a living. The exchange value is determined as in the case of every other commodity by the labour-time necessary for its production or reproduction; that means, in this case by the cost of the “means of subsistence” needed to maintain the worker and his children, the future workers. The level of subsistence and of essential needs varies from situation to situation according to the level of development and other factors.

The wage covers only what is needed to maintain the labourer, his value. But what he produces is more than that. The difference is called the surplus-value. The capitalist appropriates the surplus. To understand this concept of surplus-value, it may be helpful to have a look at the historical development. In early history people produced hardly enough for their own subsistence. As soon as they were able to increase their productivity and to produce a surplus — i.e. through cattle breeding instead of hunting — the question arose how this surplus was going to be used. In course of time, it released a section of the people from work for their own subsistence like chiefs, and priests. They

became the ruling class. Thereafter, one can analyse the labour of the producers as partly “necessary labour”, i.e. labour for their own subsistence, and partly “surplus-labour”, i.e. labour to maintain the ruling class. In the middle-ages, the serfs worked three days on their own lands for their own subsistence and three days on the lands of the feudal lord without being paid for it. With that surplus-labour they produced a social surplus which was appropriated by the ruling class. This appropriation can take place in different forms, in the form of kind – as in the case of share-cropping or in the form of money (rent). In the case of money, it is surplus value.

The capitalist tries to increase the rate of surplus value, which can be achieved in two ways: absolute and relative surplus value. Absolute surplus value is produced by “prolongation of the working day”. By such prolongation the time of surplus-labour is expanded. This method is especially applied in the earlier stages of capitalism. We find it still in the unorganised sector of industry in India.

In the early stages of capitalism we find the extraction of surplus value without the impressive and conspicuous technological revolution which characterizes the later stage of capitalist development. The level of technology is still more or less the same as in pre-capitalist society. Most other aspects of society are yet un-changed or only slowly changing. But one decisive thing has changed: the labour process is subordinated to capital. The labourer is no longer an independent producer or a serf tied to the soil. He is under the control of the capitalist in one way or the other. Marx calls this the “formal subsumption of labour under capital”. Once capital has established its hold and has accumulated sufficiently it may proceed to the “real subsumption of labour” when it starts transforming the process of labour, re-organising it and bringing it on a new technological level.

It may be noted here that this distinction is relevant to the on-going debate about the dominant mode of production in India. Whereas capitalist farmers in the Punjab get their crops sprayed with pesticides from small aeroplanes, there are sharecroppers in other parts of India making out a meagre existence in ways, which seem to belong to a pre-capitalist form of society. But the appearance may be misleading. Even where no technological changes have taken place and where the old society still is alive culturally and ideologically, capital may already be in charge economically, through the formal subsumption of labour, extracting absolute surplus value.

The key to Marx’s critique of capitalism is his theory of surplus-value which explains how capital grows by consuming living labour. Because only labour power produces surplus value, its exploitation is the basis of the capitalist system. But labour power is not only an economic factor, as it appears in the calculations of the capitalists. Labour is not only “variable capital”. Labour power is provided by living human beings who have their own needs and aspirations. Capitalism has separated labour and the satisfaction of human aspirations. Labour-power is treated as a commodity in exchange for which workers may satisfy some of their most immediate needs. But for Marx labour itself is the most essential characteristic of human life. Without it, human kind not only cannot survive, it even cannot become human. Human labour is imaginative, it is conscious and not instinctual. “We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises its structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement”.

Human labour is social. It is self-realisation through the production for others and with others. Isolated individuals cannot survive on their own. Productive interaction with nature requires co-operation, division of labour and exchange. In the process, the human species realises itself. One

might even say that the meaning of labour lies in this self-realisation of the human species. As a social process human labour creates society in its various forms. But as such it is also conditioned by society in its different forms. In the course of history the development of class societies threatens the human quality of labour. The climax of this threat is reached in capitalism, the main target of Marx's critique.

b) Emergence of Classes

When humanity first developed fire, it took thousands of years to complete the process — being able to turn heat back into motion. The same kind of process can be seen in the development of classes. When humans began to organise themselves in accordance with their relations of production (the division of labour), classes in society formed based on the different positions and roles humans found and created themselves in. What once was a society with little or no class structure, i.e. tribal or nomadic society, became a society that split and divided itself into a diversity of classes fulfilling a broad range of productive roles.

The motion of nature, dialectics, applies in class development as it applies in all things. As the productive forces of humans increased, and class distinctions deepened and divided further, soon the advancement of the productive forces reached such heights that certain classes were no longer necessary. The small craftsperson and shop owner were pushed out of existence by the advancement of modern industries that could produce a much greater quantity at much lower cost.

Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels explained the processes of change brought forth by Industrial revolution just beginning to unfold in a particular direction:

“Modern Industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army, they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois state; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, in the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is”.

“The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon, the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there, the contest breaks out into riots.

“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lie not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by Modern Industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes (Marx: Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts).

This “alienation” [caused by private property] can, of course, only be abolished given two practical premises. For it to become an “intolerable” power, i.e. a power against which men make a revolution,

it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity “property-less”. And at the same time should have produced, the contradiction of an existing world of wealth and culture. Both these conditions presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development.

Alienation as a Process

In his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (EPM) published in 1844, Marx analyses various aspects of alienation.

- 1) Firstly, the worker is alienated from the product of his labour. The product in which he expresses and realises himself does not belong to him. It is appropriated by the capitalists and sold on the market. With realisation of surplus-value capital grows, and with capital the alien power which controls and dominates the life of the worker. The more he works, the better he produces, the stronger becomes this alien power of capital.
- 2) Under the capitalist conditions the worker is alienated from the act of producing itself. The most human activity does no longer belong to the producer himself. It has become a commodity sold and bought on the market, the commodity of labour power. The buyer of this commodity, the capitalist, determines what the worker does and how he has to do it.
- 3) Capitalist production alienates the worker from his being a member of the human species and from his humanity, as being a fellow being with other human beings. His social activity, production turns into a means for his individual existence, for earning a wage. This implies his alienation from other human beings with whom he competes for scarce jobs.

Features of Alienation

Marx’s exposition of the functioning and prospects of capitalist economy cannot be studied in isolation from his anthropological ideas and his philosophy of history. His theory is a general one embracing the whole of human activity in its various interdependent spheres. His successive writings culminating in capital itself are more and more elaborate versions of the same thought which may be expressed as follows:

“we live in an age in which the dehumanisation of man, that is to say the alienation between him and his own works, is growing to a climax which must end in a revolutionary upheaval; this will originate from the particular interest of the class which has suffered the most from dehumanisation, but its effect would be to restore humanity to all mankind”.

The fundamental novelty of capital consists in two points, which entail wholly different view of capitalist society from that of the classical economists:

- a) what the worker sells is not his labour but labour power, and that labour has two aspects – abstract and concrete. Exploitation consists in the worker selling his labour power and thus divesting himself of his own essence; the labour process and its results become hostile and alien, deprivation of humanity instead of fulfillment.
- b) Marx, having discovered the dual nature of labour as expressed in the opposition between exchange value and use value, defines capitalism as a system in which the sole object of production is to increase exchange- value without limit. The whole of human activity is subordinated to a non-human purpose, the creation of something that man cannot as such assimilate for only use-value can be assimilated. The whole community is thus enslaved to its own products, abstractions which present themselves to it as an external, alien power. The deformation of consciousness and the alienation of

the political superstructure are consequences of the basic alienation of labour – which, however, is not a ‘mistake’ on history’s part but a necessary precondition of the future society of free beings in control of the vital process of their own lives.

In this way, Capital may be regarded as a logical continuation of Marx’s earlier views.

- 1) Alienation is nothing but a process in which man deprives himself of what he truly is, of his own humanity.
- 2) Marx unlike Hegel did not identify alienation with externalisation, i.e. the labour process whereby human strength and skill are converted into new products. It would be absurd to speak of abolishing alienation in this sense, since in all imaginable circumstances, men will have to expend energy to produce the things they need. Hegel identified alienation with externalisation and could therefore conceive man’s final reconciliation with the world by way of abolishing the objectivity of the object.

To Marx however, the fact that people ‘objectivize’ their powers does not mean they become poorer by whatever they produce; on the contrary, labour in itself is an affirmation and not a denial of humanity being the chief form of the unending process of man’s self-creation. It is only in a society ruled by private property and division of labour that productive activity is a source of misery and dehumanisation. And labour destroys the workman instead of enriching him. When alienated labour is done away with, people will continue to externalise and ‘objectivize’ their power, but they will be able to assimilate the work of their hands as an expression of their collective ability.

Division of Labour

The other aspect of alienation is the de-humanisation of labour itself. This happens in the course of the new division of labour promoted by capitalism. Division of labour is not invented by capitalism. It developed at an early stage of history. It is at the same time the source of material and cultural progress and of human alienation. It increases the productivity of human labour, it make it possible to produce a surplus, which again is the necessary condition for the development of culture, art, politics, and also religion. The existence of philosophers and artists, priests, and kings is possible only on this fundamental principle of division of labour. But the progressive development of culture takes place at the cost of the direct producers. Their horizon narrows down, they get specialized and lose their relation to the process as a whole. The same philosophers, priests and kings monopolise the control over society as a whole. They enjoy the freedom, which is based on the understanding and control of the total process. The others lose this freedom. They are no longer responsible members of a tribe, but isolated villagers in a huge empire, or slaves without rights, or serfs in a feudal set-up. Their life gets more and more dominated by alien forces beyond their control. In this way all division of labour lead to alienation.

In the next stage of manufacture the technical division of labour begins. Each worker is assigned to a few operations in which he specializes. Out of this a hierarchy of labour-power develops from most skilled to unskilled. Management becomes more important. Apart from control it assumes more and more the function of planning and conceptualisation of the work. The workers have to execute the task assigned to them. But as long as they are skilled they have still a certain freedom and control within the limits of their function.

Thus in this period — 16th to 18th C — three fundamental changes in the character of productive work took place:

- 1) Capitalist management imposes strict discipline of labour through means of despotic control. The artisans of old had the freedom to choose their own rhythm and style of work. Once forced into workshop and manufacture they have to subordinate themselves to the will of the managing capitalist. To manage originally meant to train a horse in his paces, to cause him to do the exercises of the manager. And control is the central concept of all management.
- 2) Under capitalist management also that fundamental division develops which separates the conceptualisation and execution of the work. This is given with the development of the detail workers who is no longer related to the production of the whole.
- 3) The Capitalist drive for profit creates for the first time a large scale unskilled labour i.e. workers who for their lifetime are condemned to do cheap unskilled labour.

In the social division of labour, the producers may have been alienated from the whole society, but there is still a possibility of meaningful self-realisation in the work. In the technical division of labour, alienation involves the process of labour itself. The social division of labour, subdivides society, the technical division of labour subdivides humans.

Braverman shows that it is capitalism which first creates this scarcity of skills: “Every step in the labour process is divorced, so far as possible, from special knowledge and training and reduced to simple labour. Meanwhile, the relatively few persons for whom special knowledge and training are reserved are freed so far as possible from the obligations of simple labour. In this way, a structure is given to all labour processes that at its extreme polarizes those whose time is infinitely valuable and those whose time is worth almost nothing. This might even be called the general law of the capitalist division of labour.”

Objectification

Marx analyses the impact of machinery and modern industry on labour. He shows how the development of technology under capitalism is geared towards the maximum production of surplus value and how it transforms the worker on the basis of the capitalist division of labour in to a living appendage of a lifeless mechanism.

“In handicrafts and manufacture, the workman makes use of a tool, in the factory, the machine makes use of him. There the movements of the instrument of labour proceed from him, here it is the movements of the machine that he must follow. In manufacture the workmen are parts of a living mechanism. In the factory we have lifeless mechanism independent of the workman, who becomes it mere living appendage”.

The fundamental characteristic of machinery is that it removes the tool from the hands of the worker and fits it into a mechanism, which is moved independently from the worker. This opens new avenues for exploitation. And above all it leads to the further degradation of the worker by completing the “separation of the intellectual powers of production from the manual labour, and the conversion of those powers into the might of capital over labour”. Thus machinery becomes:

“for most the working population, the source not of freedom, but of enslavement, not of mastery, but of helplessness, and not of the broadening of the horizon of labour but of the confinement of the worker within a blind round of servile duties in which the machine appears as the embodiment of science and the worker as little or nothing”.

Technically speaking it is the transformation of labour from processes based on skill to processes based upon science. That this process led to the degradation of the workers is not an unavoidable result of the development of science and technology, but it is the consequence of the subordination of science and technology to the purpose of capital. Marx repeatedly characterized the alienation of the worker who faces the gigantic machinery of modern, capitalist, industry, and who experiences his powerlessness in front of it, as the rule of dead labour over living labour. The worker does not see it like this. He sees the machinery as representing the wealth, the capital of the capitalist and the superior knowledge of the scientists compared to which he himself is poor and ignorant and doomed to remain so.

What confronts him is in fact “objectified labour”, the result of labour in the past. In pre-capitalist society the producer was not confronted with means of production dominating and threatening him as alien power.

“Hence the rule of the capitalist over the worker is the rule of things over man, of dead labour over the living, of the product over the producer... what we are confronted by here is the alienation of man from his own labour. To that extent the worker stands on a higher plane than the capitalist from the outset, since the latter has his roots in the process of alienation and finds absolute satisfaction in it. Whereas right from the start the worker is a victim who confronts it as a rebel and experiences it as a process of enslavement”.

Marx summarizes the alienation of labour in the following words:

First, the fact that, labour is external to the worker i.e. it does not belong to his essential being. That in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when is not working and when is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character merges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Lastly, the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates independently of the individual – that is, operates on him as an alien, divine or diabolical activity – in the same way the worker's activity, is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self.

Alienation is inevitable in modern society because with the demand for better technology, and rising consumerism, men will continue to be alienated in one form or the other. Increasing division of labour

and emergence of specialists make men dependent on the product and it is not likely that this phenomenon of alienation will stagnate and retrogress.

Conclusion

Alienation is an objective condition inherent in the social and economic arrangement of capitalism. It is impossible to extricate Marx’s ideas about alienation from his wider sociological discussion of the division of labour, the evolution of private property relations, and the emergence of conflicting classes. In the Marxian terminology, alienation is an objectively verifiable state of affairs, inherent in the specific social relations of capitalist production. For Marx, the history of mankind is not only a history of class struggle but also of the increasing alienation of man.

Comparison of Durkheim & Marx on Division of Labour		
	Durkheim	Marx
Basic approach	Functional.	Conflict.
Causes of division of labour	Both , Durkheim and Marx make a very clear distinction between division of labour in simple societies and complex industrial societies and acknowledged that division of labour is inevitable.	
	Durkheim explains division of labour in industrial societies as a consequence of increased material and moral density. Specialisation makes it possible for harmonious coexistence.	Marx does not see it as a means of cooperation and coexistence. He views it as a process forced upon workers in order to let the capitalist extract profit.
Nature of division of labour	Durkheim sees Division of Labour as functional and leading to cooperation.	Marx sees division of labour as unequal relationship which legitimises the relationship between the haves and the have nots.
Consequence of division of labour	It leads to integration in society.	It leads to dehumanisation of workers and alienation in industrial society.
Solution to the problems related to division of labour	Anomie is abnormal and according to Durkheim, can be handled by making workers conscious of their role in society. By making them feel organically linked and involved with the life of society.	According to Marx, capitalism itself is the problem. Problems of alienation can be ended through revolution.

CLASS, CLASS STRUGGLE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Marx begins with the simple observation that in order to survive, man must produce food and material objects. In doing so he enters into social relationships with other men. From the simple hunting band to the complex industrial state, production is a social enterprise. Production also involves a technical component known as the **forces of production** which includes the technology, raw materials and scientific knowledge employed in the process of production. Each major stage in the development of forces of production will correspond with a particular form of the **social relationships of production**. Thus the forces of production in a hunting economy will correspond with a particular set of social relationships. Taken together, the forces of production and the social relationships of production form the economic base or infrastructure of society (**mode of production**). The other aspects of society, known as the superstructure, are largely shaped by the infrastructure. Thus the political, legal and educational institutions and the belief and value system are primarily determined by economic factors. A major change in the infrastructure will therefore produce a corresponding change in the superstructure. Marx maintained that, with the possible exception of the societies of prehistory, all historical societies contain basic contradictions which mean that they cannot survive forever in their existing form. These contradictions involve the exploitation of one social group by another, for example in feudal society, lords exploit their serfs, in capitalist society, employers exploit their employees. This creates a fundamental conflict of interest between social groups since one gains at the expense of another. This conflict of interest must ultimately be resolved since a social system containing such contradictions cannot survive unchanged.

Thus, according to Marx, the major contradictions in society are between the forces and relations of production. The **forces of production** include land, raw materials, tools and machinery, the technical and scientific knowledge used in production, the technical organization of the production process and the labor power of the workers. The **relations of production** are the social relationships which men enter into in order to produce goods. Thus in feudal society they included the relationship between the lord and vassal and the set of rights, duties and obligations which make up that relationship. In capitalist industrial society they included the relationship between employer and employee and the various rights of the two parties. The relations of production involve the relationship of social groups to the forces of production. Thus in feudal society, land, the major force of production, is owned by the lord whereas the serf has the right to use land in return for services or payment to the lord. In Western industrial society the forces of production are owned by the capitalist whereas the worker owns only his labor which he hires to the employer in return for wages.

The idea of contradiction between the forces and relations of production may be illustrated in terms of the infrastructure of the capitalist industrial society. Marx maintained that only labour produces wealth. Thus wealth in capitalist society is produced by the labour power of the workers. However, much of this wealth is appropriated in the form of profits by the capitalists, the owners of the forces of production. The wages of the workers are well below the value of the wealth they produce. There is thus a contradiction between the forces of production, in particular the labour power of the workers which produce wealth, and the relations of production which involve the appropriation of much of that wealth by the capitalists. A related contradiction involves the technical organization of labour and the nature of ownership. In capitalist society, the forces of production include the collective production of goods by large numbers of workers in factories. Yet the forces of production are privately owned, the profits are appropriated by individuals. The

contradiction between the forces and relations of production lies in the social and collective nature of production and the private and individual nature of ownership. Marx believed that these and other contradictions would eventually lead to the downfall of the capitalist system. He maintained that by its very nature, capitalism involves the exploitation and oppression of the worker. He believed that the conflict of interest between capital and labour, which involves one group gaining at the expense of the other, could not be resolved within the framework of a capitalist economy.

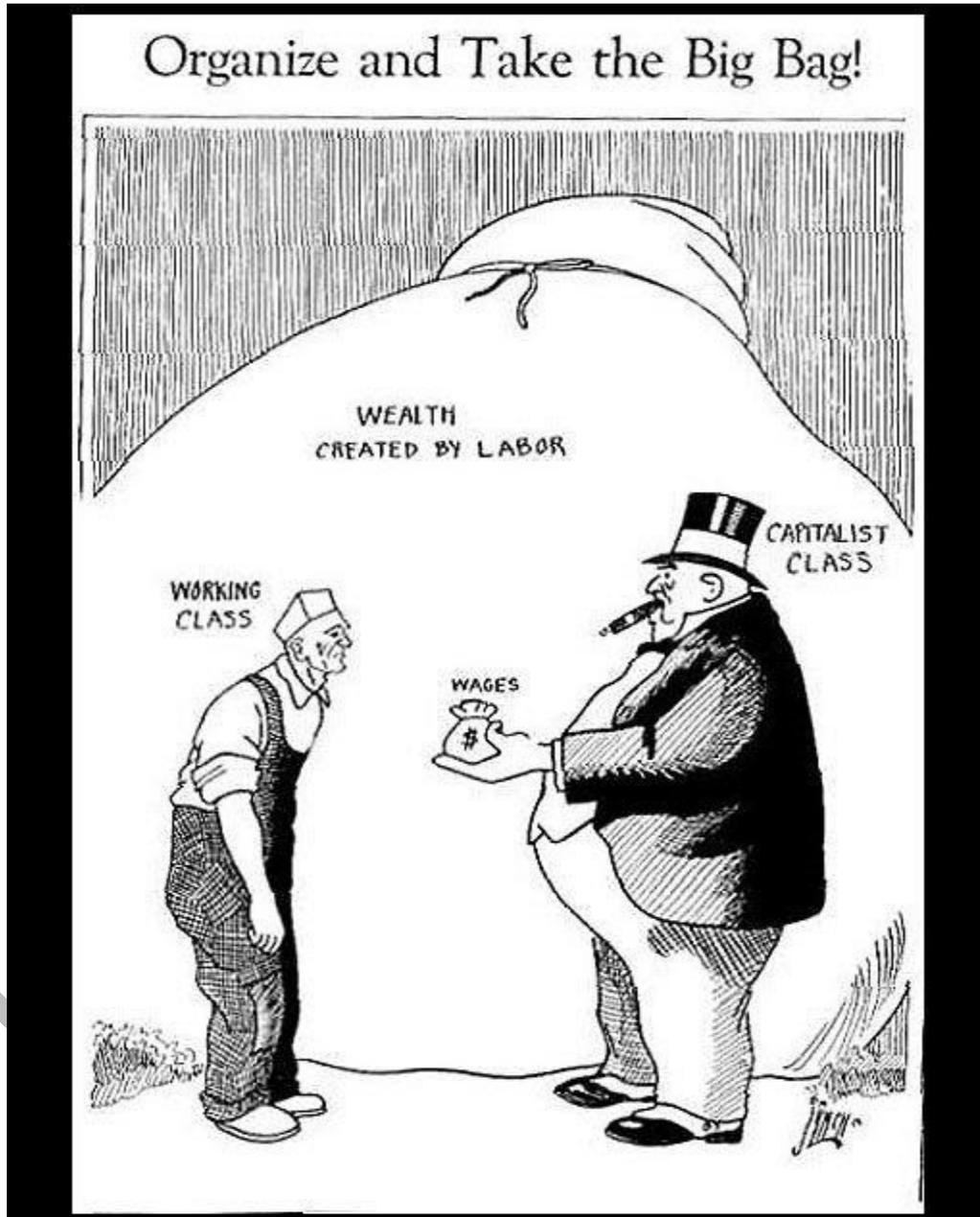
Marx saw history as divided into a number of time periods, each being characterized by a particular mode of production. Marx believed that Western society had developed through four main epochs: primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and capitalist society. Major changes in history are the result of new forces of production. For example, the change from feudal to capitalist society stemmed from the emergence, during the feudal epoch, of the forces of production of industrial society. This resulted in a contradiction between the new forces of production and the old feudal relations of productions. Capitalist industrial society required relations of production based on wage labour, rather than the traditional ties of lord and vassal. When they reach a certain point in their development, the new forces of production lead to the creation of a new set of

relations of production. Then, a new epoch of history is born which sweeps away the social relationships of the old order. However, the final epoch of history, the **communist** or **socialist society** which Marx believe would eventually supplant capitalism, will not result from a new force of production. Rather, it will develop from a resolution of the contradictions contained within the capitalist system. Collective production will remain but the relations of production will be transformed. Ownership of the forces of production will be collective rather than individual and members of society will share the wealth that their labour produces. No longer will one social group exploit and oppress another. This will produce an infrastructure without contradiction and conflict. In Marx's view this would mean the end of history since communist society would no longer contain the contradictions which generate change.

NOTE: In view of the contradictions which beset historical societies, it appears difficult to explain their survival. Despite its internal contradictions, capitalism has continued in the West for over 200 years. This continuity can be explained in large part by the nature of the superstructure. In all societies the superstructure is largely shaped by the infrastructure. In particular, the relations of productions are reflected and reproduced in the various institutions, values and beliefs that make up the superstructure. Thus the relationships of domination and subordination found in the infrastructure will also be found in social institutions. In Marx's words, 'The existing relations of production between individuals must necessarily express themselves also as political and legal relations'.

The dominant social group or ruling class, that is the group which owns and controls the forces of production, will largely monopolize political power and its position will be supported by laws which are framed to protect and further its interests. In the same way, beliefs and values will reflect and legitimate the relations of productions. Members of the ruling class 'rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas'. These ideas justify their power and privilege and conceal from all members of society the basis of exploitation and oppression on which their dominance rests. Thus under feudalism honour and loyalty were 'dominant concepts' of the age. Vassals owed loyalty to their lords and were bound by an oath of allegiance which encouraged the acceptance of their status. In terms of the dominant concept of the age, feudalism appeared as the natural order of things.

Under Capitalism, exploitation is disguised by the ideas of equality and freedom. The relationship between capitalist and wage laborer is defined as an equal exchange. The capitalist buy the labour power which the worker offers for hire. The worker is defined as a free agent since he has the freedom to choose his employer. In reality, equality and freedom are illusions. The employer-employee relationship is not equal. It is an exploitive relationship. The worker is not free since he is forced to work for the capitalist in order to survive. All he can do is exchange one form of 'wage slavery' for another. Marx refers to the dominant ideas of each epoch as 'ruling class ideology'.



A cartoon depicting the appropriation of the surplus value of labour by capitalist class

Such ideology is a distortion of reality, a false picture of society. It blinds members of society to the contradictions and conflict of interest which are built into their relationships. As a result they tend to accept their situation as normal and natural, right and proper. In this way a 'false consciousness' of reality is produced which helps to maintain the system. However, Marx believed

that ruling class ideology could only slow down the disintegration of the system. The contradictions embedded in the structure of society must eventually find expression.

In summary, the key to understanding society from a Marxian perspective involves an analysis of the infrastructure. In all historical societies there are basic contradictions between the forces and relations of production and there are fundamental conflicts of interest between the social groups involved in the production process. In particular, the relationship between the major social groups is one of exploitation and oppression. The superstructure derives largely from the infrastructure and therefore reproduces the social relationships of production. It will thus reflect the interests of the dominate group in the relations of production. Ruling class ideology distorts the true nature of society and serves to legitimate and justify the status quo. However the contradictions in the infrastructure will eventually lead to a disintegration of the system and the creation of a new society.

According to Karl Marx, in all stratified societies, there are two major social groups; a **ruling class** and a **subject class**. The power of the ruling class derives from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result, there is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes. The various institutions of society such as the legal and political systems are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. Only when the forces of production are communally owned will classes disappear, thereby bringing an end to the exploitation and oppression of some by others.

From a Marxian perspective, systems of stratification derive from the relationships of social groups to the forces of production. Marx used the term **class** to refer to the main strata in all stratification systems, though most modern sociologists would reserve the term for strata in capitalist society. **From a Marxian view, a class is a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production.** Thus during the feudal epoch, there are two main classes distinguished by their relationship to land, the major force of production. They are the feudal nobility who own the land and the landless serfs who work the land. Similarly, in the capitalist era, there are two main classes, the bourgeoisie or capitalist class which owns the forces of production and the proletariat or working class whose members own only their labour which they hire to the bourgeoisie in return for wages.

Marx believed that Western society had developed through four main epochs; **primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and capitalist society**. Primitive communism is represented by the societies of prehistory and provides the only example of a classless society. From then on, all societies are divided into two major classes: masters and slaves in ancient society, lords and serfs in feudal society and capitalists and wage labourers in capitalist society. During each historical epoch, the labour power required for production was supplied by the subject class, that is by slaves, serfs and wage labourers respectively. The subject class is made up of the majority of the population whereas the ruling or dominant class forms a minority. The relationship between the two major classes will be discussed shortly.

Classes did not exist during the era of primitive communism when societies were based on a socialist mode of production. In hunting and gathering band, the earliest form of human society, the land and its products were communally owned.

The men hunted and the woman gathered plant food, and the produce was shared by members of the band. Classes did not exist since all members of society shared the same relationship to the forces of production. Every member was both producer and owner, all provided labour power and shared the products of their labour. Hunting and gathering is a subsistence economy which means that production only meets basic survival needs.

Classes emerge when the productive capacity of society expands beyond the level required for subsistence. This occurs when agriculture becomes the dominant mode of production. In an agricultural economy, only a section of society is needed to produce the food requirements of the whole society. Thus many individuals are freed from food production and are able to specialize in other tasks. The rudimentary **division of labour** of the hunting and gathering band was replaced by an increasingly more complex and specialized division. For example, in the early agricultural villages, some individuals became full-time producers of pottery, clothing and agricultural implements. As agriculture developed, surplus wealth, that is goods above the basic subsistence needs of the community, was produced. This led to an exchange of goods and trading developed rapidly both within and between communities. This was accompanied by the development of a system of **private property**. Goods were increasingly seen as commodities or articles of trade to which the individual rather than the community had right of ownership. **Private property and the accumulation of surplus wealth form the basis for the development of class societies. In particular, they provide the preconditions for the emergence of a class of producers and a class of non-producers.** Some are able to acquire the forces of production and others are therefore obliged to work for them. The result is a class of non-producers which owns the forces of production and a class of producers which owns only its labour power.

From a Marxian perspective, the relationship between the major social classes is one of mutual dependence and conflict. Thus in capitalist society, the bourgeoisie and proletariat are dependent upon each other. The wage labourer must sell his labour power in order to survive since he does not own a part of the forces of production and lacks the means to produce goods independently. He is therefore dependent for his livelihood on the capitalists and the wages they offer. The capitalists, as non-producers, are dependent on the labour power of the wage labourers, since without it, there would be no production. However, the mutual dependency of the two classes is not a relationship of equal or symmetrical reciprocity. Instead, it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. In particular, the ruling class gains at the expense of the subject class and there is therefore a conflict of interest between them. This may be illustrated by Marx's view of the nature of ownership and production in capitalist society.

The basic characteristics of a capitalist economy may be summarized as follows. **Capital** may be defined as money used to finance the production, of commodities for private gain. In a capitalist economy goods, and the labour power, raw materials and machinery used to produce them, are given a monetary value. The capitalist invests his capital in the production of goods. Capital is accumulated by selling those goods at a value greater than their cost of production. **Capitalism therefore involves the investment of capital in the production of commodities with the aim of maximizing profit.** Capital is privately owned by a minority, the capitalist class. However, in Marx's view, it is gained from the exploitation of the mass of the population, the working class. Marx argued that capital, as such, produces nothing. Only labour produces wealth. Yet the wages paid to the workers for their labour are well below the value of the goods they produce. The difference between the value of wages and commodities is known as '**surplus value**'. This surplus value is appropriated in the form of profit by the capitalists. Since they are

non-producers, the bourgeoisie are therefore exploiting the proletariat, the real producers of wealth. Marx maintained that in all class societies, the ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class.

In simpler words, Marx argues that class divisions result from the differing relationships of members of society to the forces of production. The structure of all societies may be represented in terms of a simplified two class model consisting of ruling and subject class. The ruling class owes its dominance and power to its ownership and control of the forces of production. The subjection and relative powerlessness of the subject class is due to its lack of ownership and therefore lack of control of the forces of production. The conflict of interest between the two classes stems from the fact that productive labour is performed by the subject class yet a large part of the wealth so produced is appropriated by the ruling class. Since one class gains at the expense of another, the interests of their members are incompatible. The classes stand opposed as exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed.

The labour of the subject class takes on the character of 'forced labour'. Since its members lack the necessary means to produce for themselves they are forced to work for others. Thus during the feudal era, landless serfs were forced to work for the landowning nobility in order to gain a livelihood. In the capitalist era, the means necessary to produce goods – tools, machinery, raw materials and so on – are owned by the capitalist class. In order to exist, members of the proletariat are forced to sell their labour power in return for wages. Ownership of the forces of production therefore provides the basis for ruling class dominance and control of labour.

From a Marxian perspective political power derives from economic power. The power of the ruling class therefore stems from its ownership and control of the forces of production. Since the superstructure of society – the major institutions, values and belief systems – is seen to be largely shaped by the economic infrastructure, the relations of production will be reproduced in the superstructure. Thus the dominance of the ruling class in the relations of production will be reflected in the superstructure. In particular, the political and legal systems will reflect ruling class interests since, in Marx's words, 'The existing relations of production between individuals must necessarily express themselves also as political and legal relations'. For example, the various ownership rights of the capitalist class will be enshrined in and protected by the laws of the land. Thus the various parts of the superstructure can be seen as instruments of ruling class domination and as mechanisms for the oppression of the subject class. In the same way, the position of the dominant class is supported by beliefs and values which are systematically generated by the infrastructure. Marx refers to the dominant concepts of class societies as **ruling class ideology** since they justify and legitimate ruling class domination and project a distorted picture of reality. For example, the emphasis on freedom in capitalist society, illustrated by phrases such as 'the free market', 'free democratic societies' and the free world', is an illusion which disguises the wage slavery of the proletariat. Ruling class ideology produces '**false class consciousness**', a false picture of the nature of the relationship between social classes. Members of both classes tend to accept the status quo as normal and natural and are largely unaware of the true nature of exploitation and oppression. In other words, members of both social classes are largely unaware of the true nature of their situation, of the reality of the relationship between ruling and subject classes. Members of the ruling class assume that their particular interests are those of society as a whole, members of the subject class accept this view of reality and regard their situation as a part of the natural order of things. This false consciousness is due to the fact that the relationships of dominance and subordination in the economic infrastructure are largely reproduced in the superstructure of society. In Marx's words, the relations of production constitute 'the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which

correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life'. Ruling class dominance is confirmed and legitimated in legal statutes, religious proscriptions and political legislation. The consciousness of all members of society is infused with ruling class ideology which proclaims the essential rightness, normality and inevitability of the status quo. In this way the conflict of interest between the classes is disguised and a degree of social stability produced but the basic contradictions and conflicts of class societies remain unresolved.

Marx believed that the class struggle was the driving force of social change. He states that, **'The history of all societies up to the present is the history of the class struggle'**. A new historical epoch is created by the development of superior forces of production by new social group. These developments take place within the framework of the previous era. For example, the merchants and industrialists who spearheaded the rise of capitalism emerged during the feudal era. They accumulated capital, laid the foundations for industrial manufacturers, factory production and the system of wage labour, all of which were essential components of capitalism. The superiority of the capitalist mode of production led to a rapid transformation of the structure of society. The capitalist class became dominant, and although the feudal aristocracy maintained aspects of its power well into the nineteenth century, it was fighting a losing battle.

The class struggles of history have been between minorities. For example, capitalism developed from the struggle between the feudal aristocracy and the emerging capitalist class, both groups in numerical terms forming a minority of the population. Major changes in history have involved the replacement of one form of private property by another and of one type of production technique by another. For example, capitalism involved the replacement of privately owned land and an agricultural economy by privately owned capital and an industrial economy. Marx believed that the class struggle which would transform capitalist society would involve none of these processes. The protagonists would be the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, a minority versus a majority. Private property would be replaced by communally owned property. Industrial manufacture would remain as the basic technique of production in the society which would replace capitalism.

Marx believed that the basic contradictions contained in a capitalist economic system would lead to its eventual destruction. The proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize the forces of production, the source of power. Property would be communally owned and, since all members of society would now share the same relationship to the forces of production, a classless society would result. Since history is the history of the class struggle, history would now end. The communist society which replaces capitalism will contain no contradictions, no conflicts of interest and therefore be unchanging. However, before the dawning of this utopia, certain changes must occur.

Marx distinguished between a **'class in itself'** and a **'class for itself'**. **A class in itself is simply a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production.** Marx argues that a social group only fully becomes a class when it becomes a class for itself. At this stage its members have class consciousness and class solidarity. Class consciousness means that false class consciousness has been replaced by a full awareness of the true situation, by a realization of the nature of exploitation. Members of a class develop a common identity, recognize their shared interests and unite, so producing class solidarity. The final stage

of class consciousness and class solidarity is reached when members realize that only by collective action can they overthrow the ruling class and when they take positive steps to do so.

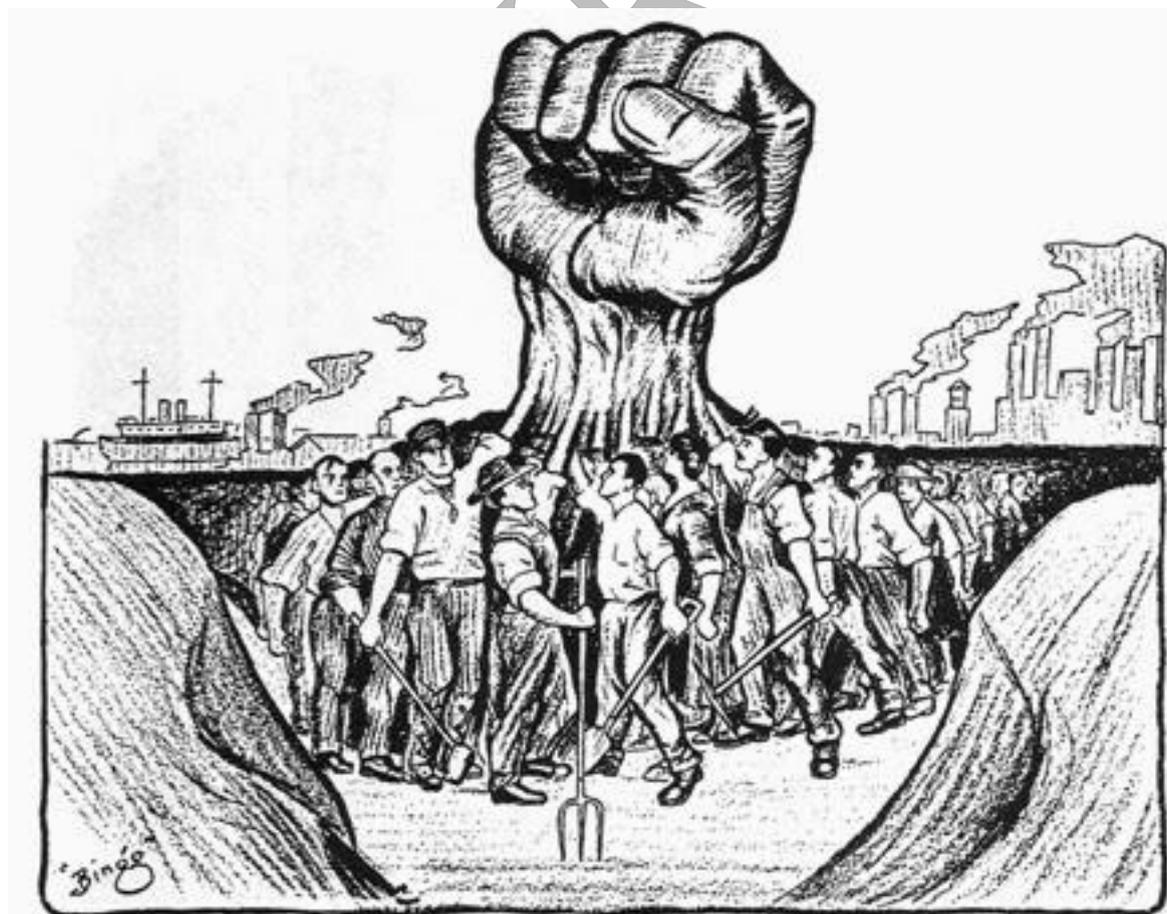
Marx believed that the following aspects of capitalist society would eventually lead to the proletariat developing into a class for itself. Firstly capitalist society is by its very nature unstable. It is based on contradictions and antagonisms which can be resolved by its transformation. In particular, the conflict of interest between the bourgeoisie and proletariat cannot be resolved within the framework of a capitalist economy. The basic conflict of interest involves the exploitation of workers by the capitalists. Marx believed that this contradiction would be highlighted by a second, the contradiction between social production and individual ownership. As capitalism developed, the workforce was increasingly concentrated in the large factories where production was a social enterprise. Social production juxtaposed with individual ownership illuminates the exploitation of the proletariat. Social production also makes it easier for workers to organize themselves against the capitalists. It facilitates communication and encourages recognition of common circumstances and interest.

Apart from the basic contradictions of capitalist society, Marx believed that certain factors in the natural development of a capitalist economy will hasten its downfall. These factors will result in the polarization of the two main classes. Firstly the increasing use of machinery will result in a **homogeneous working class**. Since 'machinery obliterates the differences in labour' members of the proletariat will become increasingly similar. The differences between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers will tend to disappear as machines remove the skill required in the production of commodities. Secondly, the difference in wealth between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat will increase as the accumulation of capital proceeds. Even though the real wages and living standards of the proletariat may rise, its members will become poorer in relation to the bourgeoisie. This process is known as **pauperization**. Thirdly, the competitive nature of capitalism means that only the largest and most wealthy companies will survive and prosper. Competition will depress the immediate strata, those groups lying between the two main classes, into the proletariat. Thus the 'petty bourgeoisie', the owners of small businesses, will 'sink into the proletariat'. At the same time the surviving companies will grow larger and capital will be concentrated into fewer hands. These three processes - the obliteration of the differences in labour, the pauperization of the working class and the depression of the intermediate strata into the proletariat - will result in the **polarization** of the two major classes. Marx believed he could observe the process of polarization in nineteenth-century Britain when he wrote, 'Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps..... bourgeoisie and proletariat'. Now the battle lines were clearly drawn, Marx hoped that the proletarian revolution would shortly follow and the communist utopia of his dreams would finally become a reality.

Marx argued that while the superstructure may stabilize society and contain its contradictions over long periods of time, this situation cannot be permanent. The fundamental contradictions of class societies will eventually find expression and will finally be resolved by the dialectic of historical change. A radical change in the structure of society occurs when a class is transformed from a 'class in itself' to a 'class for itself'. A class in itself refers to members of society who share the same objective relationships to the forces of production. Thus, as wage labourers, members of the proletariat form a class in itself. However, a class only becomes a class for itself when its members are fully conscious of the true nature of their situation, when they are fully aware of their common interests and common enemy, when they realize that only by concerted action can they overthrow their oppressors, and when they unite and take positive, practical steps to

do so. When a class becomes a class for itself, the contradiction between the consciousness of its members and the reality of their situation is ended.

A class becomes a class for itself when the forces of production have developed to the point where they cannot be contained within the existing relations of production. In Marx's words, 'For an oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself, it is essential that the existing forces of production and the existing social relations should be incapable of standing side by side'. Revolutionary change requires that the forces of production on which the new order will be based have developed in the old society. Therefore the 'new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society'. This process may be illustrated by the transition from feudal to capitalist society. Industrial capitalism gradually developed within the framework of feudal society. In order to develop fully, it required, 'the free wage labourer who sells his labour-power to capital'. This provides a mobile labour force which can be hired and fired at will and so efficiently utilized as a commodity in the service of capital. However, the feudal relations of production, which involved 'landed property with serf labour chained to it', tended to prevent the development of wage labourers. Eventually the forces of production of capitalism gained sufficient strength and impetus to lead to the destruction of the feudal system. At this point the rising class, the bourgeoisie, became a class for itself and its members united to overthrow the feudal relations of production. When they succeeded the contradiction between the new forces of production and the old relations of production was resolved.



Marx believed in the inevitability of the working class revolution

Marx further argued that once a new economic order is established, the superstructure of the previous era is rapidly transformed. The contradiction between the new infrastructure and the old superstructure is now ended. Thus the political dominance of the feudal aristocracy was replaced by the power to the newly enfranchised bourgeoisie. The dominant concepts of feudalism such as loyalty and honour were replaced by the new concepts of freedom and equality. In terms of the new ideology the wage labourer of capitalist society is free to sell his labour power to the highest bidder. The relationship between employer and employee is defined as a relationship between equals, the exchange of labour for wages as an exchange of equivalents. But the resolution of old contradictions does not necessarily mean an end to contradictions in society. As in previous eras, the transition from feudalism to capitalism merely results in the replacement of an old set of contradictions by a new.

The predicted rise of the proletariat is not strictly analogous with the rise of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie formed a privileged minority of industrialists, merchants and financiers who forged new forces of production within feudal society. The proletariat forms an unprivileged majority which does not create new forces of production within capitalist society. Marx believed, however, that the contradictions of capitalism were sufficient to transform the proletariat into a class for itself and bring about the downfall of the bourgeoisie. He saw the magnitude of these contradictions and the intensity of class conflict steadily increasing as capitalism developed. Thus there is a steady polarization of the two major classes as the intermediate strata are submerged into the proletariat. As capital accumulates, it is concentrated more and more into fewer hands, a process accompanied by the relative pauperization of the proletariat. Production assumes an increasingly social and cooperative character as larger and larger groups of workers are concentrated in factories. At the same time the wealth produced by labour is appropriated by fewer and fewer individuals as greater competition drives all but the larger companies out of business. Such processes magnify and illuminate the contradictions of capitalism and increase the intensity of conflict. It is only a matter of time before members of the proletariat recognize that the reality of their situation is the alienation of labour. This awareness will lead the proletariat to 'a revolt to which it is forced by the contradiction between its *humanity* and its situation, which is an open, clear and absolute negation of its humanity'.

The **communist society** which Marx predicted would arise from the ruins of capitalism will begin with a transitional phase, '**the dictatorship of the proletariat**'. Once the communist system has been fully established, the reason for being of the dictatorship and therefore its existence will end. The communist society of the new era is without classes, without contradictions. The dialectical principle now ceases to operate. The contradictions of human history have now been negated in a final harmonious synthesis.

Judging from the constant reinterpretations, impassioned defenses and vehement criticisms of Marx's work, his ideas are as alive and relevant today as they ever were. Many of his critics have argued that history has failed to substantiate Marx's views on the direction of social change. Thus they claim that class conflict, far from growing in intensity, has become institutionalized in advanced capitalist society. They see little indication of the proletariat becoming a class for itself. Rather than a polarization of classes, they argue that the class structure of capitalist society has become increasingly complex and differentiated. In particular, a steadily growing middle class has emerged between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Turning to communist society, critics have argued that history has not borne out the promise of communism contained in Marx's writings. Significant

social inequalities are present in communist regimes and there are few, if any, signs of a movement towards equality. The dictatorship of the proletariat clings stubbornly to power and there is little indication of its eventual disappearance. Particular criticism has been directed towards the priority that Marx assigns to economic factors in his explanation of social structure and social change. Max Weber's study of ascetic Protestantism argued that religious beliefs provided the ethics, attitudes and motivations for the development of capitalism. Since ascetic Protestantism preceded the advent of capitalism, Weber maintained that at certain times and places aspects of the superstructure can play a primary role in directing change. The priority given to economic factors has also been criticized by elite theorists who have argued that control of the machinery of government rather than ownership of the forces of production provides the basis for power. They point to the example of communist societies where, despite the fact that the forces of production are communally owned, power is largely monopolized by a political and bureaucratic elite.

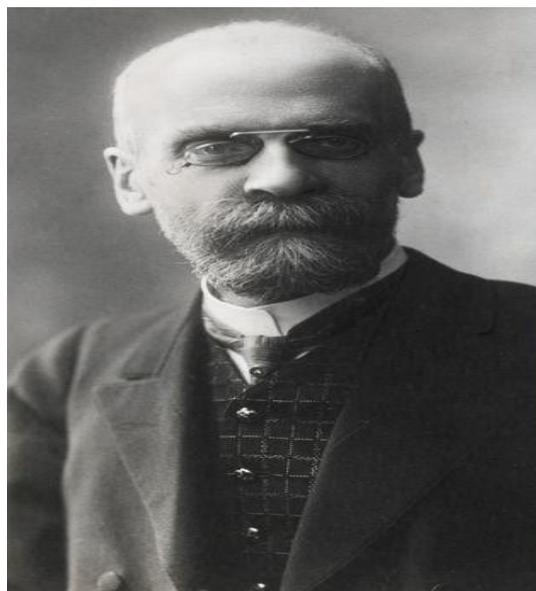
The German sociologist **Ralf Dahrendorf** claims that the social structure of advanced societies has undergone some very significant changes since Marx's time. These changes have resulted in a "transformed" capitalism, and the modern industrial societies are organized in terms of "**imperatively coordinated associations**," i.e. associations of people controlled by a hierarchy of authority and power. According to Dahrendorf, some of the key features of advanced industrial societies are:

- **Decomposition of capital** (stock holders and managers): This implies the separation of ownership and control over large corporations such as joint stock companies where the ownership (in the form of equity) lies with the public at large while the control is exercised by the management, professionals, technocrats and other experts.
- **Decomposition of labour** (from homogeneous group of equally unskilled and impoverished people, to differentiated occupational groups, with differentiated attributes and status (prestige, responsibility, authority)): Dahrendorf believes that during the twentieth century there has been a 'decomposition of labour', a disintegrating of the manual working class. Contrary to Marx's prediction, the manual working class has become increasingly heterogeneous or dissimilar by the emergence of new differentiations of skill. He sees this resulting from changes in technology arguing that 'increasingly complex machines require increasingly qualified designers, builders, maintenance and repair men and even minders'. Dahrendorf claims that the working class is now divided into three distinct levels: unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled manual workers. Differences in economic and prestige rewards are linked to this hierarchy of skill. In view of the differences in skill, economic and status rewards and interests within the ranks of manual workers, Dahrendorf claims that 'it has become doubtful whether speaking of the working class still makes much sense'. He believes that during the twentieth century there has been a 'decomposition of labour', a disintegration of the manual working class.
- **Institutionalisation of class conflict** (industrial bargaining): According to Dahrendorf, the tension between labour and capital is recognized as a principle of the structure of the labour market and has become a legal institution of society. As workers have become increasingly skilled, educated and better paid, they have become more integrated into the middle layers of society. The traditional sources of discontent and labour militancy have

been dissolved. The basis for class struggle is gone. Conflicts now develop within imperatively coordinated associations (institutional structures such as business organizations, unions and so forth) and are resolved rationally and fairly through mediation, arbitration or adjudication.

However, despite criticisms, Marx's work on class has been examined in detail for the following reasons. Firstly, many sociologists claim that his theory still provides the best explanation of the nature of class in capitalist society. Secondly, much of the research on class has been inspired by ideas and questions raised by Marx. Thirdly, many of the concepts of class analysis introduced by Marx have proved useful to Marxists and non-Marxists alike. And, as T.B. Bottomore writing in 1965 notes, 'For the past eighty years Marx's theory has been the object of unrelenting criticism and tenacious defence'. This observation remains true today.

IAS GURUKUL

EMILE DURKHEIM**A Biographical Sketch****Emile Durkheim**

Emile Durkheim was born on April 15, 1858, in Epinal, France. He was descended from a long line of rabbis and studied to be a rabbi, but by the time he was in his teens, he had largely disavowed his heritage. From that time on, his lifelong interest in religion was more academic than theological (Mestrovic, 1988). He was dissatisfied not only with his religious training but also with his general education and its emphasis on literary and esthetic matters. He longed for schooling in scientific methods and in the moral principles needed to guide social life. He rejected a traditional academic career in philosophy and sought instead to acquire the scientific training needed to contribute to the moral guidance of society. Although he was interested in scientific sociology, there was no field of sociology at that time, so between 1882 and 1887 he taught philosophy in a number of provincial schools in the Paris area.

His appetite for science was whetted further by a trip to Germany, where he was exposed to the scientific psychology being pioneered by Wilhelm Wundt (Durkheim, 1887/1993). In the years immediately after his visit to Germany, Durkheim published a good deal, basing his work, in part, on his experiences there (R. Jones, 1994). These publications helped him gain a position in the department of philosophy at the University of Bordeaux in 1887 (Pearce, 2005). There Durkheim offered the first course in social science in a French university. This was a particularly impressive accomplishment, because only a decade earlier, a furor had erupted in a French university after the mention of August Comte in a student dissertation. Durkheim's main responsibility, however, was teaching courses in education to schoolteachers, and his most important course was in the area of moral education. His goal was to communicate a moral system to the educators, who he hoped would then pass the system on to young people in an effort to help reverse the moral degeneration he saw around him in French society.

The years that followed were characterized by a series of personal successes for Durkheim. In 1893 he published his French doctoral thesis, *The Division of Labor in Society*, as well as his Latin thesis on Montesquieu (Durkheim, 1892/1997; W. Miller, 1993). His major methodological statement, *The*

Rules of Sociological Method, appeared in 1895, followed (in 1897) by his empirical application of those methods in the study Suicide. By 1896 he had become a full professor at Bordeaux. In 1902 he was summoned to the famous French university the Sorbonne, and in 1906 he was named professor of the science of education, a title that was changed in 1913 to professor of the science of education and sociology. The other of his most famous works, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, was published in 1912.

Durkheim is most often thought of today as a political conservative, and his influence within sociology certainly has been a conservative one. Durkheim had a deep and lifelong interest in morality and the moral crisis confronting modern society.

Durkheim had a profound influence on the development of sociology, but his influence was not restricted to it. Much of his impact on other fields came through the journal *L'année sociologique*, which he founded in 1898. An intellectual circle arose around the journal with Durkheim at its center. Through it, he and his ideas influenced such fields as anthropology, history (especially the *Annales* school), linguistics, and psychology.

Durkheim died in 1917, a celebrated figure in French intellectual circles, but it was not until over twenty years later, with the publication of Talcott Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action*, that his work became a significant influence on American sociology.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR IN SOCIETY

The *Division of Labor in Society* (Durkheim, 1893) has been called sociology's first classic. In this work, Durkheim traced the development of the modern relation between individuals and society. In particular, Durkheim wanted to use his new science of sociology to examine what many at the time had come to see as the modern crisis of morality. The preface to the first edition begins, "This book is above all an attempt to treat the facts of moral life according to the methods of the positive sciences." In France in Durkheim's day, there was a widespread feeling of moral crisis. The French Revolution had ushered in a focus on the rights of the individual that often expressed itself as an attack on traditional authority and religious beliefs. This trend continued even after the fall of the revolutionary government. By the mid-nineteenth century, many people felt that social order was threatened because people thought only about themselves and not about society. In the less than 100 years between the French Revolution and Durkheim's maturity, France went through three monarchies, two empires, and three republics. These regimes produced fourteen constitutions. The feeling of moral crisis was brought to a head by Prussia's crushing defeat of France in 1870, which included the annexation of Durkheim's birthplace by Prussia. This was followed by the short-lived and violent revolution known as the Paris Commune. Both the defeat and the subsequent revolt were blamed on the problem of rampant individualism.

August Comte argued that many of these events could be traced to the increasing division of labor. In simpler societies, people do basically the same thing, such as farming, and they share common experiences and consequently have common values. In modern society, in contrast, everyone has a different job. When different people are assigned various specialized tasks, they no longer share common experiences. This diversity undermines the shared moral beliefs that are necessary for a society. Consequently, people will not sacrifice in times of social need. Comte proposed that sociology create a new pseudo-religion that would reinstate social cohesion. To a large degree, *The Division of Labor in Society* can be seen as a refutation of Comte's analysis. Durkheim argues that

the division of labor does not represent the disappearance of social morality so much as a new kind of social morality.

The thesis of *The Division of Labor* is that modern society is not held together by the similarities between people who do basically similar things. Instead, it is the division of labor itself that pulls people together by forcing them to be dependent on each other. It may seem that the division of labor is an economic necessity that corrodes the feeling of solidarity, but Durkheim argued that “the economic services that it can render are insignificant compared with the moral effect that it produces and its true function is to create between two or more people a feeling of solidarity.”

Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

The change in the division of labor has had enormous implications for the structure of society. Durkheim was most interested in the changed way in which social solidarity is produced, in other words, the changed way in which society is held together and how its members see themselves as part of a whole. To capture this difference, Durkheim referred to two types of solidarity—mechanical and organic. A society characterized by mechanical solidarity is unified because all people are generalists. The bond among people is that they are all engaged in similar activities and have similar responsibilities. In contrast, a society characterized by organic solidarity is held together by the differences among people, by the fact that all have different tasks and responsibilities.

Because people in modern society perform a relatively narrow range of tasks, they need many other people in order to survive. The primitive family headed by father-hunter and mother-food gatherer is practically self-sufficient, but the modern family needs the grocer, baker, butcher, auto mechanic, teacher, police officer, and so forth. These people, in turn, need the kinds of services that others provide in order to live in the modern world. Modern society, in Durkheim’s view, is thus held together by the specialization of people and their need for the services of many others. This specialization includes not only that of individuals but also of groups, structures, and institutions.

Durkheim argued that primitive societies have a stronger collective conscience, that is, more shared understandings, norms, and beliefs. The increasing division of labor has caused a diminution of the collective conscience. The collective conscience is of much less significance in a society with organic solidarity than it is in a society with mechanical solidarity. People in modern society are more likely to be held together by the division of labor and the resulting need for the functions performed by others than they are by a shared and powerful collective conscience. Nevertheless, even organic societies have a collective consciousness, albeit in a weaker form that allows for more individual differences.

Anthony Giddens (1972) points out that the collective conscience in the two types of society can be differentiated on four dimensions—volume, intensity, rigidity, and content. Volume refers to the number of people enveloped by the collective conscience; intensity, to how deeply the individuals feel about it; rigidity, to how clearly it is defined; and content, to the form that the collective conscience takes in the two types of society. In a society characterized by mechanical solidarity, the collective conscience covers virtually the entire society and all its members; it is believed in with great intensity; it is extremely rigid; and its content is highly religious in character. In a society with organic solidarity, the collective conscience is limited to particular groups; it is adhered to with much less intensity; it is not very rigid; and its content is the elevation of the importance of the individual to a moral precept.

Dynamic Density

The division of labor was a material social fact to Durkheim because it is a pattern of interactions in the social world. As indicated above, social facts must be explained by other social facts. Durkheim believed that the cause of the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity was dynamic density. This concept refers to the number of people in a society and the amount of interaction that occurs among them. More people means an increase in the competition for scarce resources, and more interaction means a more intense struggle for survival among the basically similar components of society.

The problems associated with dynamic density usually are resolved through differentiation and, ultimately, the emergence of new forms of social organization. The rise of the division of labor allows people to complement, rather than conflict with, one another. Furthermore, the increased division of labor makes for greater efficiency, with the result that resources increase, making the competition over them more peaceful.

In societies with organic solidarity, less competition and more differentiation allow people to cooperate more and to all be supported by the same resource base. Therefore, difference allows for even closer bonds between people than does similarity. Thus, in a society characterized by organic solidarity, there are both more solidarity and more individuality than there are in a society characterized by mechanical solidarity. Individuality, then, is not the opposite of close social bonds but a requirement for them.

Repressive and Restitutive Law

The division of labor and dynamic density are material social facts, but Durkheim's main interest was in the forms of solidarity, which are nonmaterial social facts. Durkheim felt that it was difficult to study nonmaterial social facts directly, especially something as pervasive as a collective conscience. In order to study non-material social facts scientifically, the sociologist should examine material social facts that reflect the nature of, and changes in, nonmaterial social facts. In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim chose to study the differences between law in societies with mechanical solidarity and law in societies with organic solidarity (Cotterrell).

Durkheim argued that a society with mechanical solidarity is characterized by repressive law. Because people are very similar in this type of society, and because they tend to believe very strongly in a common morality, any offense against their shared value system is likely to be of significance to most individuals. Since everyone feels the offense and believes deeply in the common morality, a wrongdoer is likely to be punished severely for any action that offends the collective moral system. Theft might lead to the cutting off of the offender's hands; blaspheming might result in the removal of one's tongue. Even minor offenses against the moral system are likely to be met with severe punishment.

In contrast, a society with organic solidarity is characterized by restitutive law, which requires offenders to make restitution for their crimes. In such societies, offenses are more likely to be seen as committed against a particular individual or segment of society than against the moral system itself. Because there is a weak common morality, most people do not react emotionally to a breach of the law. Instead of being severely punished for every offense against the collective morality, offenders in an organic society are likely to be asked to make restitution to those who have been harmed by their actions. Although some repressive law continues to exist in a society with organic solidarity (for example, the death penalty), restitutive law predominates, especially for minor offenses.

In summary, Durkheim argues in *The Division of Labor* that the form of moral solidarity has changed in modern society, not disappeared. We have a new form of solidarity that allows for more interdependence and closer, less competitive relations and that produces a new form of law based on restitution. However, this book was far from a celebration of modern society. Durkheim argued that this new form of solidarity is prone to certain kinds of social pathologies.

Normal and Pathological

Perhaps the most controversial of Durkheim's claims was that the sociologist is able to distinguish between healthy and pathological societies. After using this idea in *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim wrote another book, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, in which, among other things, he attempted to refine and defend this idea. He claimed that a healthy society can be recognized because the sociologist will find similar conditions in other societies in similar stages. If a society departs from what is normally found, it is probably pathological.

This idea was attacked at the time, and there are few sociologists today who subscribe to it. Even Durkheim, when he wrote the "Preface to the Second Edition" of *The Rules*, no longer attempted to defend it: "It seems pointless for us to revert to the other controversies that this book has given rise to, for they do not touch upon anything essential. The general orientation of the method does not depend upon the procedures preferred to classify social types or distinguish the normal from the pathological"

Nevertheless, there is one interesting idea that Durkheim derived from this argument: the idea that crime is normal (Smith, 2008) rather than pathological. He argued that since crime is found in every society, it must be normal and provide a useful function. Crime, he claimed, helps societies define and delineate their collective conscience: "Imagine a community of saints in an exemplary and perfect monastery. In it crime as such will be unknown, but faults that appear venial to the ordinary person will arouse the same scandal as does normal crime in ordinary consciences. If therefore that community has the power to judge and punish, it will term such acts criminal and deal with them as such".

In *The Division of Labor*, he used the idea of pathology to criticize some of the "abnormal" forms the division of labor takes in modern society. He identified three abnormal forms: (1) the anomic division of labor, the forced division of labor, and (3) the poorly coordinated division of labor. Durkheim maintained that the moral crises of modernity that Comte and others had identified with the division of labor were really caused by these abnormal forms.

The anomic division of labor refers to the lack of regulation in a society that celebrates isolated individuality and refrains from telling people what they should do. Durkheim further develops this concept of anomie in his work on suicide, discussed later. In both works, he uses the term to refer to social conditions in which humans lack sufficient moral restraint (Bar Haim, 1997; Hilbert, 1986). For Durkheim, modern society is always prone to anomie, but it comes to the fore in times of social and economic crises.

Without the strong common morality of mechanical solidarity, people might not have a clear concept of what is and what is not proper and acceptable behavior. Even though the division of labor is a source of cohesion in modern society, it cannot entirely make up for the weakening of the common morality. Individuals can become isolated and be cut adrift in their highly specialized activities. They can more easily cease to feel a common bond with those who work and live around them. This gives

rise to anomie. Organic solidarity is prone to this particular “pathology,” but it is division of labor has the capacity to promote increased moral interactions rather than reducing people to isolated and meaningless tasks and positions.

While Durkheim believed that people needed rules and regulation to tell them what to do, his second abnormal form pointed to a kind of rule that could lead to conflict and isolation and therefore increase anomie. He called this the forced division of labor. This second pathology refers to the fact that outdated norms and expectations can force individuals, groups, and classes into positions for which they are ill suited. Traditions, economic power, or status can determine who performs what jobs regard- less of talent and qualification. It is here that Durkheim comes closest to a Marxist position:

If one class in society is obliged, in order to live, to take any price for its services, while another class can pass over this situation, because of the resources already at its disposal, resources that, however, are not necessarily the result of some social superiority, the latter group has an unjust advantage over the former with respect to the law.

Finally, the third form of abnormal division of labor is evident when the specialized functions performed by different people are poorly coordinated. Again Durkheim makes the point that organic solidarity flows from the interdependence of people. If people’s specializations do not result in increased interdependence but simply in isolation, the division of labor will not result in social solidarity.

Justice

For the division of labor to function as a moral and socially solidifying force in modern society, anomie, the forced division of labor, and the improper coordination of specialization must be addressed. Modern societies are no longer held together by shared experiences and common beliefs. Instead, they are held together through their very differences, so long as those differences are allowed to develop in a way that promotes interdependence. Key to this for Durkheim is social justice:

The task of the most advanced societies is, then, a work of justice. . . . Just as the idea of lower societies was to create or maintain as intense a common life as possible, in which the individual was absorbed, so our idea is to make social relations always more equitable, so as to assure the free development of all our socially useful forces.

Morality, social solidarity, justice—these were big themes for a first book in a fledgling field. Durkheim was to return to these ideas again in his work, but never again would he look at them in terms of society as a whole. He predicted in his second book, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, that sociology itself would succumb to the division of labor and break down into a collection of specialties. Whether this has led to an increased interdependence and an organic solidarity in sociology is still an open question.

Social Facts

In order to help sociology move away from philosophy and to give it a clear and separate identity, Durkheim proposed that the distinctive subject matter of sociology should be the study of social facts. Briefly, social facts are the social structures and cultural norms and values that are external to, and coercive of, actors. Students, for example, are constrained by such social structures as the university bureaucracy as well as the norms and values of American society, which place great importance on a college education. Similar social facts constrain people in all areas of social life.

Crucial in separating sociology from philosophy is the idea that social facts are to be treated as “things” and studied empirically. This means that we must study social facts by acquiring data from outside of our own minds through observation and experimentation. The empirical study of social facts as things sets Durkheimian sociology apart from more philosophical approaches.

A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.

Note that Durkheim gave two ways of defining a social fact so that sociology is distinguished from psychology. First, a social fact is experienced as an external constraint rather than an internal drive; second, it is general throughout the society and is not attached to any particular individual.

Durkheim argued that social facts cannot be reduced to individuals, but must be studied as their own reality. Durkheim referred to social facts with the Latin term *sui generis*, which means “unique.” He used this term to claim that social facts have their own unique character that is not reducible to individual consciousness. To allow that social facts could be explained by reference to individuals would be to reduce sociology to psychology. Instead, social facts can be explained only by other social facts. We will study some examples of this type of explanation below, where Durkheim explains the division of labor and even the rate of suicide with other social facts rather than individual intentions. To summarize, social facts can be empirically studied, are external to the individual, are coercive of the individual, and are explained by other social facts.

Durkheim himself gave several examples of social facts, including legal rules, moral obligations, and social conventions. He also refers to language as a social fact, and it provides an easily understood example. First, language is a “thing” that must be studied empirically. One cannot simply philosophize about the logical rules of language. Certainly, all languages have some logical rules regarding grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and so forth; however, all languages also have important exceptions to these logical rules (Quine, 1972). What follows the rules and what are exceptions must be discovered empirically by studying actual language use, especially since language use changes over time in ways that are not completely predictable.

Second, language is external to the individual. Although individuals use a language, language is not defined or created by the individual. The fact that individuals adapt language to their own use indicates that language is first external to the individual and in need of adaptation for individual use. Indeed, some philosophers have argued that there cannot be such a thing as a private language. A collection of words with only private meanings would not qualify as a language because it could not perform the basic function of a language: communication. Language is, by definition, social and therefore external to any particular individual.

Third, language is coercive of the individual. The language that we use makes some things extremely difficult to say. For example, people in lifelong relationships with same-sex partners have a very difficult time referring to each other. Should they call each other “partners”—leading people into thinking they are in business together—“significant others,” “lovers,” “spouses,” “special friends”? Each seems to have its disadvantages. Language is part of the system of social facts that makes life with a same-sex partner difficult even if every individual should be personally accepting of same-sex relationships.

Finally, changes in language can be explained only by other social facts and never by one individual’s intentions. Even in those rare instances where a change in language can be traced to an individual, the actual explanation for the change is the social facts that have made society open to this change. For example, the most changeable part of language is slang, which almost always originates in a marginal social group. We may assume that an individual first originates a slang term, but which individual is irrelevant. It is the fact of the marginal social group that truly explains the history and function of the slang.

Some sociologists feel that Durkheim took an “extremist” position (Karady) in limiting sociology to the study of social facts. This position has limited at least some branches of sociology to the present day. Furthermore, Durkheim seemed to artificially sever sociology from neighboring fields. As Lemert puts it, “Because he defined sociology so exclusively in relation to its own facts, Durkheim cut it off from the other sciences of man.” Nevertheless, whatever its subsequent drawbacks, Durkheim’s idea of social facts both established sociology as an independent field of study and provided one of the most convincing arguments for studying society as it is before we decide what it should be.

Material and Nonmaterial Social Facts

Durkheim differentiated between two broad types of social facts—material and nonmaterial. Material social facts, such as styles of architecture, forms of technology, and legal codes, are the easier to understand of the two because they are directly observable. Clearly, such things as laws are external to individuals and coercive over them. More importantly, these material social facts often express a far larger and more powerful realm of moral forces that are at least equally external to individuals and coercive over them. These are nonmaterial social facts.

The bulk of Durkheim’s studies, and the heart of his sociology, lies in the study of nonmaterial social facts. Durkheim said: “Not all social consciousness achieves . . . externalization and materialization” (1897/1951:315). What sociologists now call norms and values, or more generally culture (Alexander, 1988), are good examples of what Durkheim meant by nonmaterial social facts. But this idea creates a problem: How can nonmaterial social facts like norms and values be external to the actor? Where could they be found except in the minds of actors? And if they are in the minds of actors, are they not internal rather than external?

Durkheim recognized that nonmaterial social facts are, to a certain extent, found in the minds of individuals. However, it was his belief that when people begin to interact in complex ways, their interactions will “obey laws all their own” (Durkheim,

1912/1965:471). Individuals are still necessary as a kind of substrate for the nonmaterial social facts, but the particular form and content will be determined by the complex interactions and not by the individuals. Hence, Durkheim could write in the same work first that “Social things are actualized only through men; they are the product of human activity” (1895/1982:17) and second that “Society is

not a mere sum of individuals". Despite the fact that society is made up only of human beings and contains no immaterial "spiritual" substance, it can be understood only through studying the interactions rather than the individuals. The interactions, even when nonmaterial, have their own levels of reality. This has been called "relational realism" (Alpert).

Durkheim saw social facts along a continuum of materiality (Lukes). The sociologist usually begins a study by focusing on material social facts, which are empirically accessible, in order to understand nonmaterial social facts, which are the real focus of his work. The most material are such things as population size and density, channels of communication, and housing arrangements (Andrews). Durkheim called these facts morphological, and they figure most importantly in his first book, *The Division of Labor in Society*. At another level are structural components (a bureaucracy, for example), which are a mixture of morphological components (the density of people in a building and their lines of communication) and nonmaterial social facts (such as the bureaucratic norms).

Types of Nonmaterial Social Facts

Since nonmaterial social facts are so important to Durkheim, we will examine four different types—morality, collective conscience, collective representations, and social currents—before considering how Durkheim used these types in his studies.

Morality

Durkheim was a sociologist of morality in the broadest sense of the word (R. T. Hall). Studying him reminds us that a concern with morality was at the foundation of sociology as a discipline. Durkheim's view of morality had two aspects. First, Durkheim was convinced that morality is a social fact, in other words, that morality can be empirically studied, is external to the individual, is coercive of the individual, and is explained by other social facts. This means that morality is not something that one can philosophize about, but something that one has to study as an empirical phenomenon. This is particularly true because morality is intimately related to the social structure. To understand the morality of any particular institution, you have to first study how the institution is constituted, how it came to assume its present form, what its place is in the overall structure of society, how the various institutional obligations are related to the social good, and so forth.

Second, Durkheim was a sociologist of morality because his studies were driven by his concern about the moral "health" of modern society. Much of Durkheim's sociology can be seen as a by-product of his concern with moral issues. Indeed, one of Durkheim's associates wrote in a review of his life's work that "one will fail to understand his works if one does not take account of the fact that morality was their center and object".

It was not that Durkheim thought that society had become, or was in danger of becoming, immoral. That was simply impossible because morality was, for Durkheim, identified with society. Therefore, society could not be immoral, but it could certainly lose its moral force if the collective interest of society became nothing but the sum of self-interests. Only to the extent that morality was a social fact could it impose an obligation on individuals that superseded their self-interest. Consequently, Durkheim believed that society needs a strong common morality. What the morality should be was of less interest to him.

Durkheim's great concern with morality was related to his curious definition of freedom. In Durkheim's view, people were in danger of a "pathological" loosening of moral bonds. These moral bonds were important to Durkheim, for without them the individual would be enslaved by ever-

expanding and insatiable passions. People would be impelled by their passions into a mad search for gratification, but each new gratification would lead only to more and more needs. According to Durkheim, the one thing that every human will always want is “more.” And, of course, that is the one thing we ultimately cannot have. If society does not limit us, we will become slaves to the pursuit of more. Consequently, Durkheim held the seemingly paradoxical view that the individual needs morality and external control in order to be free. This view of the insatiable desire at the core of every human is central to his sociology.

Collective Conscience

Durkheim attempted to deal with his interest in common morality in various ways and with different concepts. In his early efforts to deal with this issue, Durkheim developed the idea of the collective conscience. In French, the word conscience means both “consciousness” and “moral conscience.” Durkheim characterized the collective conscience in the following way:

The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the collective or common conscience. . . . It is, thus, an entirely different thing from particular consciences, although it can be realized only through them.

Several points are worth underscoring in this definition. First, it is clear that Durkheim thought of the collective conscience as occurring throughout a given society when he wrote of the “totality” of people’s beliefs and sentiments. Second, Durkheim clearly conceived of the collective conscience as being independent and capable of determining other social facts. It is not just a reflection of a material base as Marx sometimes suggested. Finally, although he held such views of the collective conscience, Durkheim also wrote of its being “realized” through individual consciousness.

Collective conscience refers to the general structure of shared understandings, norms, and beliefs. It is therefore an all-embracing and amorphous concept. As we will see below, Durkheim employed this concept to argue that “primitive” societies had a stronger collective conscience—that is, more shared understandings, norms, and beliefs—than modern societies.

Collective Representations

Because collective conscience is such a broad and amorphous idea, it is impossible to study directly and must be approached through related material social facts. (For example, we will look at Durkheim’s use of the legal system to say something about the collective conscience.) Durkheim’s dissatisfaction with this limitation led him to use the collective conscience less in his later work in favor of the much more specific concept of collective representations. The French word *représentation* literally means “idea.” Durkheim used the term to refer to both a collective concept and a social “force.” Examples of collective representations are religious symbols, myths, and popular legends. All of these are ways in which society reflects on itself. They represent collective beliefs, norms, and values, and they motivate us to conform to these collective claims.

Collective representations also cannot be reduced to individuals because they emerge out of social interactions, but they can be studied more directly than collective conscience because they are more likely to be connected to material symbols such as flags, icons, and pictures or connected to practices such as rituals. Therefore, the sociologist can begin to study how certain collective representations fit well together, or have an affinity, and others do not. As an example, we can look at a sociological

study that shows how representations of Abraham Lincoln have changed in response to other social facts.

Between the turn of the century and 1945, Lincoln, like other heroic presidents, was idealized. Prints showed him holding Theodore Roosevelt's hand and pointing him in the right direction, or hovering in ethereal splendor behind Woodrow Wilson as he contemplated matters of war and peace, or placing his reassuring hand on Franklin Roosevelt's shoulder. Cartoons showed admirers looking up to his statue

or portrait. Neoclassical statues depicted him larger than life; state portraits enveloped him in the majesty of presidential power; "grand style" history painting showed him altering the fate of the nation. By the 1960s, however, traditional pictures had disappeared and been replaced by a new kind of representation on billboards, posters, cartoons, and magazine covers. Here Lincoln is shown wearing a party hat and blowing a whistle to mark a bank's anniversary; there he is

playing a saxophone to announce a rock concert; elsewhere he is depicted arm in arm with a seductive Marilyn Monroe, or sitting upon his Lincoln Memorial chair of state grasping a can of beer, or wearing sunglasses and looking "cool," or exchanging Valentine cards with George Washington to signify that Valentine's Day had displaced their own traditional birthday celebrations. Post-1960s commemorative iconography articulates the diminishing of Lincoln's dignity,

Abraham Lincoln functions in American society as a collective representation in that his various representations allow a people to think about themselves as Americans—as either American patriots or American consumers. His image is also a force that motivates us to perform a patriotic duty or to buy a greeting card. A study of this representation allows us to better understand changes in American society.

It is possible for these nonmaterial and ephemeral social facts to affect even the strongest institutions. Ramet (1991), for example, reports that the social currents that are potentially created among a crowd at a rock concert were looked at as a threat by eastern European communist governments and, indeed, contributed to their downfall. Rock concerts were places for the emergence and dissemination of "cultural standards, fashions, and behavioral syndromes independent of party control". In particular, members of the audience were likely to see an expression of their alienation in the concert. Their own feelings were thereby affirmed, strengthened, and given new social and political meanings. In other words, political leaders were afraid of rock concerts because of the potential for the depressing individual feelings of alienation to be transformed into the motivating social fact of alienation. This provides another example of how social facts are related to but different from individual feelings and intentions.

Given the emphasis on norms, values, and culture in contemporary sociology, we have little difficulty accepting Durkheim's interest in nonmaterial social facts. However, the concept of social currents does cause us a few problems. Particularly troublesome is the idea of a set of independent social currents "coursing" through the social world as if they were somehow suspended in a social void. This problem has led many to criticize Durkheim for having a group-mind orientation.

Those who accuse Durkheim of having such a perspective argue that he accorded nonmaterial social facts an autonomous existence, separate from actors. But cultural phenomena cannot float by themselves in a social void, and Durkheim was well aware of this.

But how are we to conceive of this social consciousness? Is it a simple and transcendent being, soaring above society? . . . It is certain that experience shows us nothing of the sort. The collective mind is only a composite of individual minds. But the latter are not mechanically juxtaposed and closed off from one another. They are in perpetual interaction through the exchange of symbols; they interpenetrate one another. They group themselves according to their natural affinities; they coordinate and systematize themselves. In this way is formed an entirely new psychological being, one without equal in the world. The consciousness with which it is endowed is infinitely more intense and more vast than those which resonate within it. For it is “a consciousness of consciousnesses”. Within it, we find condensed at once all the vitality of the present and of the past.

Social currents can be viewed as sets of meanings that are shared by the members of a collectivity. As such, they cannot be explained in terms of the mind of any given individual. Individuals certainly contribute to social currents, but by becoming social something new develops through their interactions. Social currents can only be explained inter-subjectively, that is, in terms of the interactions between individuals. They exist at the level of interactions, not at the level of individuals. These collective “moods,” or social currents, vary from one collectivity to another, with the result that there is variation in the rate of certain behaviors, including, as we will see below, something as seemingly individualistic as suicide.

In fact, there are very strong similarities between Durkheim’s theory of social facts and current theories about the relation between the brain and the mind (Sawyer). Both theories use the idea that complex, constantly changing systems will begin to display new properties that “cannot be predicted from a full and complete description of the component units of the system”. Even though modern philosophy assumes that the mind is nothing but brain functions, the argument is that the complexity of the interconnections in the brain creates a new level of reality, the mind, that is not explainable in terms of individual neurons. This was precisely Durkheim’s argument: that the complexity and intensity of interactions between individuals cause a new level of reality to emerge that cannot be explained in terms of the individuals. Hence, it could be argued that Durkheim had a very modern conception of nonmaterial social facts that encompasses norms, values, culture, and a variety of shared social-psychological phenomena.

Suicide

It has been suggested that Durkheim's study of suicide is the paradigmatic example of how a sociologist should connect theory and research (Merton, 1968). Indeed, Durkheim makes it clear in the "Preface" that he intended this study not only to contribute to the understanding of a particular social problem, but also to serve as an example of his new sociological method.

Durkheim chose to study suicide because it is a relatively concrete and specific phenomenon for which there were comparatively good data available. However, Durkheim's most important reason for studying suicide was to prove the power of the new science of sociology. Suicide is generally considered to be one of the most private and personal acts. Durkheim believed that if he could show that sociology had a role to play in explaining such a seemingly individualistic act as suicide, it would be relatively easy to extend sociology's domain to phenomena that are much more readily seen as open to sociological analysis.

As a sociologist, Durkheim was not concerned with studying why any specific individual committed suicide. That was to be left to the psychologists. Instead, Durkheim was interested in explaining differences in suicide rates; that is, he was interested in why one group had a higher rate of suicide than did another. Psychological or biological factors may explain why a particular individual in a group commits suicide, but Durkheim assumed that only social facts could explain why one group had a higher rate of suicide than did another.



Even today, Suicide is largely studied as a psychological phenomenon

Durkheim proposed two related ways of evaluating suicide rates. One way is to compare different societies or other types of collectivities. Another way is to look at the changes in the suicide rate in the same collectivity over time. In either case, cross-culturally or historically, the logic of the argument is essentially the same. If there is variation in suicide rates from one group to another or from one time period to another, Durkheim believed that the difference would be the consequence of variations in sociological factors, in particular, social currents. Durkheim acknowledged that individuals may have reasons for committing suicide, but these reasons are not the real cause: "They may be said to indicate the individual's weak points, where the outside current bearing the impulse to self-destruction most easily finds introduction. But they are no part of this current itself, and consequently cannot help us to understand it".

Durkheim began Suicide by testing and rejecting a series of alternative ideas about the causes of suicide. Among these are individual psychopathology, alcoholism, race, heredity, and climate. Not all of Durkheim's arguments are convincing (see, for example, Skog, 1991, for an examination of Durkheim's argument against alcoholism). However, what is important is his method of empirically dismissing what he considered extraneous factors so that he could get to what he thought of as the most important causal variables.

One of his contemporaries, the French social psychologist Gabriel Tarde argues that people commit suicide (and engage in a wide range of other actions) because they are imitating the actions of others. This social-psychological approach was the most important competitor to Durkheim's focus on social facts. As a result, Durkheim took great pains to discredit it. For example, Durkheim reasoned that if imitation were truly important, we should find that nations that border on a country with a high suicide rate would themselves have high rates, but an examination of the data showed that no such relationship existed. Durkheim admitted that some individual suicides may be the result of imitation, but it is such a minor factor that it has no significant effect on the overall suicide rate.

Durkheim concluded that the critical factors in differences in suicide rates were to be found in differences at the level of social facts. Different groups have different collective sentiments, which produce different social currents. It is these social currents that affect individual decisions about suicide. In other words, changes in the collective sentiments lead to changes in social currents, which, in turn, lead to changes in suicide rates.

The Four Types of Suicide

Durkheim's theory of suicide can be seen more clearly if we examine the relation between the types of suicide and his two underlying social facts—integration and regulation (Pope, 1976). Integration refers to the strength of the attachment that we have to society. Regulation refers to the degree of external constraint on people. For Durkheim, the two social currents are continuous variables, and suicide rates go up when either of these currents is too low or too high. We therefore have four types of suicide. If integration is high, Durkheim calls that type of suicide altruistic. Low integration results in an increase in egoistic suicides. Fatalistic suicide is associated with high regulation, and anomic suicide with low regulation.

Egoistic Suicide

High rates of egoistic suicide are likely to be found in societies or groups in which the individual is not well integrated into the larger social unit. This lack of integration leads to a feeling that the individual is not part of society, but this also means that society is not part of the individual. Durkheim believed that the best parts of a human being—our morality, values, and sense of purpose—come from society. An integrated society provides us with these things, as well as a general feeling of moral support to get us through the daily small indignities and trivial disappointments. Without this, we are liable to commit suicide at the smallest frustration.

The lack of social integration produces distinctive social currents, and these currents cause differences in suicide rates. For example, Durkheim talked of societal disintegration leading to “currents of depression and disillusionment”. Politics is dominated by a sense of futility, morality is seen as an individual choice, and popular philosophies stress the meaninglessness of life. In contrast, strongly integrated groups discourage suicide. The protective, enveloping social currents produced by integrated societies prevent the widespread occurrence of egoistic suicide by, among other things,

providing people with a sense of the broader meaning of their lives. Here is the way Durkheim puts it regarding religious groups:

Religion protects man against the desire for self-destruction. . . . What constitutes religion is the existence of a certain number of beliefs and practices common to all the faithful, traditional and thus obligatory. The more numerous and strong these collective states of mind are, the stronger the integration of the religious community, also the greater its preservative value.

However, Durkheim demonstrated that not all religions provide the same degree of protection from suicide. Protestant religions with their emphasis on individual faith over church community and their lack of communal rituals tend to provide less protection. His principal point is that it is not the particular beliefs of the religion that are important, but the degree of integration.

Durkheim's statistics also showed that suicide rates go up for those who are unmarried and therefore less integrated into a family, whereas the rates go down in times of national political crises such as wars and revolutions, when social causes and revolutionary or nationalist fervor give people's lives greater meaning. He argues that the only thing that all of these have in common is the increased feeling of integration.

Interestingly, Durkheim affirms the importance of social forces even in the case of egoistic suicide, where the individual might be thought to be free of social constraints. Actors are never free of the force of the collectivity: "However individualized a man may be, there is always something collective remaining—the very depression and melancholy resulting from this same exaggerated individualism. He effects communion through sadness when he no longer has anything else with which to achieve it" (Durkheim). The case of egoistic suicide indicates that in even the most individualistic, most private of acts, social facts are the key determinant.

Altruistic Suicide

The second type of suicide discussed by Durkheim is altruistic suicide. Whereas egoistic suicide is more likely to occur when social integration is too weak, altruistic suicide is more likely to occur when "social integration is too strong". The individual is literally forced into committing suicide.

One notorious example of altruistic suicide was the mass suicide of the followers of the Reverend Jim Jones in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978. They knowingly took a poisoned drink and in some cases had their children drink it as well. They clearly were committing suicide because they were so tightly integrated into the society of Jones's fanatical followers. Durkheim notes that this is also the explanation for those who seek to be martyrs, as in the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. More generally, those who commit altruistic suicide do so because they feel that it is their duty to do so. Durkheim argued that this is particularly likely in the military, where the degree of integration is so strong that an individual will feel that he or she has disgraced the entire group by the most trivial of failures.

Whereas higher rates of egoistic suicide stem from "incurable weariness and sad depression," the increased likelihood of altruistic suicide "springs from hope, for it depends on the belief in beautiful perspectives beyond this life". When integration is low, people will commit suicide because they have no greater good to sustain them. When integration is high, they commit suicide in the name of that greater good.

Anomic Suicide

The third major form of suicide discussed by Durkheim is anomic suicide, which is more likely to occur when the regulative powers of society are disrupted. Such disruptions are likely to leave individuals dissatisfied because there is little control over their passions, which are free to run wild in an insatiable race for gratification. Rates of anomic suicide are likely to rise whether the nature of the disruption is positive (for example, an economic boom) or negative (an economic depression). Either type of disruption renders the collectivity temporarily incapable of exercising its authority over individuals. Such changes put people in new situations in which the old norms no longer apply but new ones have yet to develop. Periods of disruption unleash currents of anomie—moods of rootlessness and normlessness—and these currents lead to an increase in rates of anomic suicide. This is relatively easy to envisage in the case of an economic depression. The closing of a factory because of a depression may lead to the loss of a job, with the result that the individual is cut adrift from the regulative effect that both the company and the job may have had. Being cut off from these structures or others (for example, family, religion, and state) can leave an individual highly vulnerable to the effects of currents of anomie.

Somewhat more difficult to imagine is the effect of an economic boom. In this case, Durkheim argued that sudden success leads individuals away from the traditional structures in which they are embedded. It may lead individuals to quit their jobs, move to a new community, and perhaps even find a new spouse. All these changes disrupt the regulative effect of extant structures and leave the individual in boom periods vulnerable to anomic social currents. In such a condition, people's activity is released from regulation, and even their dreams are no longer restrained. People in an economic boom seem to have limitless prospects, and "reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations"

The increases in rates of anomic suicide during periods of deregulation of social life are consistent with Durkheim's views on the pernicious effect of individual passions when freed of external constraint. People thus freed will become slaves to their passions and as a result, in Durkheim's view, commit a wide range of destructive acts, including killing themselves.

Fatalistic Suicide

There is a little-mentioned fourth type of suicide—fatalistic—that Durkheim discussed only in a footnote in *Suicide*. Whereas anomic suicide is more likely to occur in situations in which regulation is too weak, fatalistic suicide is more likely to occur when regulation is excessive. Durkheim described those who are more likely to commit fatalistic suicide as "persons with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive discipline." The classic example is the slave who takes his own life because of the hopelessness associated with the oppressive regulation of his every action. Too much regulation—oppression—unleashes currents of melancholy that, in turn, cause a rise in the rate of fatalistic suicide.

Durkheim argued that social currents cause changes in the rates of suicides. Individual suicides are affected by these underlying currents of egoism, altruism, anomie, and fatalism. This proved, for Durkheim, that these currents are more than just the sum of individuals, but are *sui generis* forces, because they dominate the decisions of individuals. Without this assumption, the stability of the suicide rate for any particular society could not be explained.

Suicide Rates and Social Reform

Durkheim concludes his study of suicide with an examination of what reforms could be undertaken to prevent it. Most attempts to prevent suicide have failed because it has been seen as an individual

problem. For Durkheim, attempts to directly convince individuals not to commit suicide are futile, since its real causes are in society.

Of course, the first question to be asked is whether suicide should be prevented or whether it counts among those social phenomena that Durkheim would call normal because of its widespread prevalence. This is an especially important question for Durkheim because his theory says that suicides result from social currents that, in a less exaggerated form, are good for society. We would not want to stop all economic booms because they lead to anomic suicides, nor would we stop valuing individuality because it leads to egoistic suicide. Similarly, altruistic suicide results from our virtuous tendency to sacrifice ourselves for the community. The pursuit of progress, the belief in the individual, and the spirit of sacrifice all have their place in society, and cannot exist without generating some suicides.

Durkheim admits that some suicide is normal, but he argues that modern society has seen a pathological increase in both egoistic and anomic suicides. Here his position can be traced back to *The Division of Labor*, where he argued that the anomie of modern culture is due to the abnormal way in which labor is divided so that it leads to isolation rather than interdependence. What is needed, then, is a way to preserve the benefits of modernity without unduly increasing suicides—a way of balancing these social currents. In our society, Durkheim believes, these currents are out of balance. In particular, social regulation and integration are too low, leading to an abnormal rate of anomic and egoistic suicides.

Many of the existing institutions for connecting the individual and society have failed, and Durkheim sees little hope of their success. The modern state is too distant from the individual to influence his or her life with enough force and continuity. The church cannot exert its integrating effect without at the same time repressing freedom of thought. Even the family, possibly the most integrative institution in modern society, will fail in this task because it is subject to the same corrosive conditions that are increasing suicide.

Instead, what Durkheim suggests is the need of a different institution based on occupational groups. We will discuss these occupational associations more below, but what is important here is that Durkheim proposes a social solution to a social problem.

Religion & Society

In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, published in 1912, Emile Durkheim presented what is probably the most influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist perspective. Durkheim argues that all societies divide the world into two categories, the sacred and the profane, or more simply, the sacred and the non-sacred. Religion is based upon this division. It is 'a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden'. It is important to realize that, 'By sacred things one must not understand simply those personal things which are called gods or spirits; a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word anything can be sacred'. There is nothing about the particular qualities of a pebble or a tree which makes them sacred. Therefore sacred things must be symbols, they must represent something. To understand the role of religion in society, the relationship between sacred symbols and that which they represent must be established.



A totem carved on a bullroarer

Durkheim uses the religion of various groups of Australian aborigines to develop his argument. He sees their religion, which he calls **totemism**, as the simplest and most basic form of religion. Aborigine society is divided into several clans. A clan is like a large extended family with its members sharing certain duties and obligations. For example, clans have a rule of exogamy members may not marry within the clan. Clan members have a duty to aid and assist each other; they join together to mourn the death of one of their number and to revenge a member who has been wronged by someone from another clan. Each clan has a totem, usually an animal or a plant. The totem is a symbol. It is the emblem of the clan, 'It is its flag; it is the sign by which each clan distinguishes itself from all others'.

However, the totem is more than this, it is a sacred symbol. It is carved on the bullroarer, the most sacred object in aborigine ritual. The totem is the outward and visible form of the totemic principle or god. Durkheim argues that if the totem, is at once the symbol of god and of the society, is that not because the god and the society are only one? Thus he suggests that in worshipping god, men are in fact worshipping society. Society is the real object of religious veneration.

How does man come to worship society? Sacred things are considered superior in dignity and power to profane things and particularly to man. In relation to the sacred, man's position is inferior and dependent. This relationship between man and sacred things is exactly the relationship between man and society. Society is more important and powerful than the individual. Durkheim argues that, 'Primitive man comes to view society as something sacred because he is utterly dependent on it'. But why does man not simply worship society itself? Why does he invent a sacred symbol like a totem?

Because, Durkheim argues, 'it is easier for him to visualize and direct his feelings of awe toward a symbol than towards so complex a thing as a clan'.

Durkheim argues that social life is impossible without the shared values and moral beliefs which form the 'collective conscience'. In their absence, there would be no social order, social control, social solidarity or cooperation. In short, there would be no society. Religion reinforces the collective conscience. The worship of society strengthens the values and moral beliefs which form the basis of social life. By defining them as sacred, religion provides them with greater power to direct human action. The attitude of respect towards the sacred is the same attitude applied to social duties and obligations. In worshipping society, men are, in effect, recognizing the importance of the social group and their dependence upon it. In this way religion strengthens the unity of the group, it promotes social solidarity. Durkheim emphasizes the importance of collective worship. The social group comes together in religious rituals infused with drama and reverence. Together, its members express their faith in common values and beliefs. In this highly charged atmosphere of collective worship, the integration of society is strengthened. Members of society express, communicate and comprehend the moral bonds which unite them.

Durkheim's ideas remain influential, though they are not without criticism. Some anthropologists have argued that he is not justified in seeing totemism as a religion. Most sociologists believe that Durkheim has overstated his case. Whilst agreeing that religion is important for promoting social solidarity and reinforcing social values, they would not support the view that religion is the worship of society. Durkheim's views on religion are more relevant to small, non-literate societies, where there is a close integration of culture and social institutions, where work, leisure, education and family life tend to merge, and where members share a common belief and value system. They are less relevant to modern societies, which have many subcultures, social and ethnic groups, specialized organisations and a range of religious beliefs, practices and institutions.

The Sacred and The Profane

The concepts of sacred and profane are central to Durkheim's theory of religion. According to him, all aspects of human experience can be divided into two radically and diametrically opposed categories : the sacred and the profane.

What is the nature of the Sacred?

Durkheim says that the sacred is ideal and transcends everyday existence; it is extra-ordinary, potentially dangerous, awe-inspiring, fear-inducing. The sacred, for Durkheim, refers to things set apart by man, including religious beliefs, rites, duties, or anything socially defined as requiring special religious treatment. The sacred has extra-ordinary, supernatural, and often dangerous qualities and can usually be approached only through some form of ritual, such as prayer, incantation, or ceremonial cleansing. Almost anything can be sacred: a god, a rock; a cross, the moon, the earth, a king, a tree, an animal or bird, or a symbol, such as Swastik. These are sacred only because some community has marked them as sacred. Once established as 'sacred', however, they become symbols of religious beliefs, sentiments and practices.

What is the Profane ?

The profane is mundane, that is, anything ordinary. It is a part of the ordinary realm rather than the supernatural world. The profane or ordinary or unholy' embraces those ideas, persons, practices, and things that are regarded with an everyday attitude of commonness, utility and familiarity . It is that which is not supposed to come into contact with or take precedence over the sacred. The unholy or the

'profane is also believed to contaminate the 'holy' or 'sacred'. It is the denial or sub-ordination of the holy in some way. The attitudes and behaviour toward it are charged with negative emotions and hedged about by strong taboos -{Kingsley Davis.) A rock, the moon, a king, a tree or a symbol may also be considered profane. It means something becomes sacred or profane only when it is socially defined as such by a community of believers.

The sacred and the profane are closely related because of the highly emotional attitude towards them. The distinction between the two is not very much clear, but ambiguous. As Durkheim has pointed out, The circle of sacred objects cannot be determined, then, once and for all. Its extent varies indefinitely according to different religions. The significance of the sacred lies in the fact of its distinction from the profane: The sacred thing is par excellence that which profane should not touch and cannot touch with impurity. Man always draws this distinction of the two orders in different times and places. Participation in the sacred order, for example, in rituals and ceremonies, gives a special social prestige, which actually reveals one of the social functions of religion. Mechanisms are established by all religions for keeping these two worlds (sacred and profane) from communication with one another. One result of this segregation is that the sacred cannot be questioned or challenged by the profane. The sacred can remain fixed or stable to the degree that it succeeds in insulating itself from the secular or profane. Breaches of this segregation are treated as sacrilegious or heretical and may be dealt with by a wide range of sanctions -Bernard S. Philips writes in his book, 'Sociology Social Structure and Change'.

Nature and Qualities of the Sacred

Metta Spencer and Alex Inkeles have enlisted seven qualities of the sacred as described by Durkheim. They are :

- (i) The sacred is recognised as a power or force,
- (ii) It is characterized by ambiguity in that, it is both physical and moral, human and cosmic, positive and negative, attractive and repugnant, helpful and dangerous to men,
- (iii) It is non-utilitarian,
- (iv) It is non-empirical
- (v) It does not involve knowledge of any rational or scientific character,
- (vi) It strengthens and supports worshippers, and
- (vii) It makes moral demand on the believer and worshipper.

The sacred quality is not intrinsic to objects but is conferred on them by religious thought and feeling. The sacred does not help one to manipulate natural forces and is useless in practical sense. It is not even an experience based on knowledge and the senses, but involves a definite break with the everyday world.

God as Sacred. The sacred may be a supernatural being, that is, god. Those who believe in one god are monotheists. More than 985 million Christians, 14.5 million Jews and 471 million Muslims are monotheists. Those who worship more than one god are polytheists, say, the Hindus, whose number exceeds 472 millions.

Ghost as Sacred. Gods are not alone among the sacred. Many worship the sacred ghost or ancestor spirit. Such spirits are also believed to possess superhuman qualities. But they are of human origin rather than of divine. Shintoism, for example, with its more than 60 million followers (mostly found in Japan) is based on reverence towards family ancestors.

Moral or Philosophical Principle as Sacred. A moral or philosophical principle can also be sacred. For example, the Asian religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism-all stress the importance of certain ethical and spiritual ideals. Buddhism is more concerned with Buddha's message of four noble truths than with him as the god. Similarly, more importance is laid on the Eight-fold path ' to attain nirvana a state of spiritual detachment.

Totem as the Sacred : Totems are another example of Durkheim's sacred things . The totemic object-an animal or plant-is worshipped by primitive people all over the world. The totem is a symbol, a treasury of deep group-based sentiments and feelings. It is worshipped as a god or as an ancestor, or both, and it generally possesses some special quality or significance for the religious community.

Supernatural Force as Sacred. A supernatural force is still another example of a sacred thing although it has no shape of its own. Example : On certain islands of Oceania, a warrior successful in battle while using a particular spear will attribute his victory to 'mana' -a supernatural force that entered his spear. The supernatural force, on the whole, may be good or bad.

Thus, whether be it a force, or a god, a ghost, a moral principle, or a totemic object-all are elements of Durkheim's definition of religion. All are forms of the sacred and all bear witness to the existence of religious behaviour.

"To what do the sacred symbols of religious belief and practice refer? — Durkheim asks. Durkheim is of the opinion that they cannot refer to the external environment or to individual human nature but only to the moral reality of society. The source and object of religion are the collective life; the sacred is at bottom society personified -Dr. Timasheff

Thus, according to Durkheim, man's attitudes towards God and society are more or less similar. Both " inspire the sensation of divinity, both possess moral authority and stimulate devotion, self-sacrifice and exceptional individual behaviour. The individual who feels dependent on some external moral power is not, therefore, a victim of hallucination but a member of and responding to society itself. Durkheim concludes that the substantial function of religion is the creation, reinforcement and maintenance of social solidarity. So long as society persists so will religion . -Dr. Timasheff

MAX WEBER

Social action

In one of his most important works, *Economy and Society*, Weber said: 'Sociology is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences.' By making this statement Weber was trying to spell out the precise limits of what could and could not be explained in sociological terms.

To Weber, a social action was an action carried out by an individual to which a person attached a meaning; an action which, in his words, 'takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course. Thus an action that a person does not think about cannot be a social action. For example, an accidental collision of bicycles or involuntary cries of pain are not social actions because they are not the result of any conscious thought process. Furthermore, if an action does not take account of the existence and possible reactions of others, it is not social. If a person prays in private, in secrecy, it cannot be a social action as nobody knows about it and the actor could not be taking account of the possible actions of others.

Social action and Verstehen

Having identified the subject matter of sociology, Weber went on to suggest how social action could be explained. Before the cause of a social action could be found, it was necessary to understand the meaning attached to it by the actor. He distinguished two types of understanding. First, he referred to *oktuelles Verstehen*, which can roughly be translated as direct observational understanding. For example, it is possible to understand that someone is angry by observing their facial expression. Similarly, it is possible to understand what is happening when a woodcutter hits a piece of wood with an axe that is, the woodcutter is chopping wood. However, this is not, to Weber, a sufficient level of understanding to begin to explain social action.

The second type of understanding is *erklarendes Verstehen*, or explanatory understanding. In this case the sociologist must try to understand the meaning of an act in terms of the motives that have given rise to it. Thus *erklarendes Verstehen* would require an understanding of why the woodcutter was chopping wood. Was it in order to earn a wage, to make a fire, or to work off anger? To achieve this type of understanding it is necessary to put yourself in the shoes of the person whose behaviour you are explaining. You should imagine yourself in their situation to try to get at the motives behind their actions.

Causal explanations

Even this level of understanding is not sufficient to explain a series of actions or events. For a full causal explanation it is necessary to determine what has given rise to the motives that led to the actions. Here Weber advocated the use of methods closer to a positivist approach. He attempted to discover connections between events and to establish causal relationships. This can be seen from his study. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Weber tried to show that there was a relationship between ascetic Protestantism and capitalism. He claimed ascetic Protestantism preceded capitalism and was found almost exclusively in those countries that became capitalist. Nevertheless, this was not sufficient to convince Weber that there

was a causal connection between the two, because it did not establish how or why ascetic Protestantism contributed to the rise of capitalism. In order to establish this link, Weber tried to understand the motives of ascetic Protestants for adopting capitalist behaviour. He believed their main motive was to convince themselves that they were predestined to go to heaven.

Weber's work on the rise of capitalism illustrates his belief that social actions, particularly those involving large numbers of people behaving in similar ways, could lead to large-scale social changes such as the advent of capitalism. Furthermore, even when Weber sounds rather like a structuralist sociologist, he usually insists he is really describing a type of social action. Thus, while society might contain institutions and social groups, these institutions and social groups are composed of individuals engaged in social action. Weber said:

When reference is made in a sociological context to a state, a nation, a corporation, a family or an army corps, or to similar collectivities, what is meant is ... only a certain kind of development of actual or possible social actions of individual persons. Weber, 1958, first published 1904

Social action and bureaucracy

Weber's general views on the relationship between institutions and social action can be illustrated by his important work on bureaucracies. Bureaucracies might be seen as institutions that closely control and direct human behaviour or social actions. Although Weber was aware of, and indeed concerned about, the power of bureaucracies in restricting human freedom, he nevertheless saw them as composed of individuals carrying out social actions. Thus he believed bureaucracies consisted of individuals carrying out rational social actions designed to achieve the goals of bureaucracies.

Significantly, Weber saw the whole development of modern societies in terms of a move towards rational social action. Thus, to Weber, modern societies were undergoing a process of rationalization, as affective or emotional action and action directed by custom and tradition (traditional action) became less important. Weber's views on bureaucracy will now be examined in detail.

Bureaucracy and rationalization

Weber believed bureaucratic organisations were the dominant institutions of industrial society. Weber saw bureaucracy as an organisation with a hierarchy of paid, full-time officials who formed a chain of command. A bureaucracy is concerned with the business of administration: with controlling, managing and coordinating a complex series of tasks.

Bureaucratic organisations are increasingly dominating the institutional landscape: departments of state, political parties, business enterprises, the military, education and churches are all organised on bureaucratic lines.

To appreciate the nature of modern society, Weber maintained that an understanding of the process of bureaucratization is essential. Marxists see fundamental differences between capitalist and socialist industrial societies. To Weber, their differences are minimal compared to the essential similarity of bureaucratic organisation. This is the defining characteristic of modern industrial society.

Bureaucracy and rational action

Weber's view of bureaucracy must be seen in the context of his general theory of social action. He argued that all human action is directed by meanings. Thus, in order to understand and explain an action, the meanings and motives that lie behind it must be appreciated. Weber identified various types of action that are distinguished by the meanings on which they are based. These include 'affective' or emotional action 'traditional action' and 'rational action'.

1. Affective or emotional action stems from an individual's emotional state at a particular time. A loss of temper that results in verbal abuse or physical violence is an example of affective action.

2. Traditional action is based on established custom. Individuals act in a certain way because of ingrained habit: because things have always been done that way. They have no real awareness of why they do something; their actions are simply second nature.

3. By comparison, rational action involves a clear awareness of a goal: it is the action of a manager who wishes to increase productivity or of a builder contracted to erect a block of flats. In both cases the goal is clearly defined. Rational action also involves a systematic assessment of the various means of attaining a goal and the selection of the most appropriate means to do so. Thus, if a capitalist in the building trade aimed to maximize profit, he or she would carefully evaluate factors such as alternative sites, raw materials, building techniques, labour costs, and the potential market, in order to realize his or her goal. This would entail a precise calculation of costs and the careful weighing up of the advantages and disadvantages of the various factors involved. The action is rational since, in Weber's words, rational action is the methodical attainment of a definitely given and practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of means.

Weber believed rational action had become the dominant mode of action in modern industrial society. He saw it expressed in a wide variety of areas: in state administration, business, education, science, and even in Western classical music. He referred to the increasing dominance of rational action as the process of rationalization.

Bureaucratization is a prime example of this process. A bureaucratic organisation has a clearly defined goal. It involves the precise calculation of the means to attain this goal and systematically eliminating those factors that stand in the way of the achievement of its objectives. Bureaucracy is therefore rational action in an institutional form.

Ideal Types

The ideal type is one of Weber's best-known contributions to contemporary sociology. As we have seen, Weber believed it was the responsibility of sociologists to develop conceptual tools, which could be used later by historians and sociologists. The most important such conceptual tool was the ideal type:

An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct . . . In its conceptual purity, this mental construct . . . cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality.

In spite of this definition, Weber was not totally consistent in the way he used the ideal type. To grasp what the concept means initially, we will have to overlook some of the inconsistencies. At its most

basic level, an ideal type is a concept constructed by a social scientist, on the basis of his or her interests and theoretical orientation, to capture the essential features of some social phenomenon.

The most important thing about ideal types is that they are heuristic devices; they are to be useful and helpful in doing empirical research and in understanding a specific aspect of the social world (or a “historical individual”). As Lachman said, an ideal type is “essentially a measuring rod” (1971:26), or in Kalberg’s terms, a “yardstick”. Here is the way Weber put it: “Its function is the comparison with empirical reality in order to establish its divergences or similarities, to describe them with the most unambiguously intelligible concepts, and to understand and explain them causally”. Ideal types are heuristic devices to be used in the study of slices of historical reality. For example, social scientists would construct an idealtypical bureaucracy on the basis of their immersion in historical data. This ideal type can then be compared to actual bureaucracies. The researcher looks for divergences in the real case from the exaggerated ideal type. Next, the social scientist must look for the causes of the deviations. Some typical reasons for these divergences are:

1. Actions of bureaucrats that are motivated by misinformation.
2. Strategic errors, primarily by the bureaucratic leaders.
3. Logical fallacies undergirding the actions of leaders and followers.
4. Decisions made in the bureaucracy on the basis of emotion.
5. Any irrationality in the action of bureaucratic leaders and followers.

To take another example, an ideal-typical military battle delineates the principal components of such a battle—opposing armies, opposing strategies, materiel at the disposal of each, disputed land (“no-man’s land”), supply and support forces, command centers, and leadership qualities. Actual battles may not have all these elements, and that is one thing a researcher wants to know. The basic point is that the elements of any particular military battle may be compared with the elements identified in the ideal type.

The elements of an ideal type (such as the components of the ideal-typical military battle) are not to be thrown together arbitrarily; they are combined on the basis of their compatibility. As Hekman puts it, “Ideal types are not the product of the whim or fancy of a social scientist, but are logically constructed concepts”. (However, they can and should reflect the interests of the social scientist.)

In Weber’s view, the ideal type was to be derived inductively from the real world of social history. Weber did not believe that it was enough to offer a carefully defined set of concepts, especially if they were deductively derived from an abstract theory. The concepts had to be empirically adequate. Thus, in order to produce ideal types, researchers had first to immerse themselves in historical reality and then derive the types from that reality.

In line with Weber’s efforts to find a middle ground between nomothetic and idiographic knowledge, he argued that ideal types should be neither too general nor too specific. For example, in the case of religion he would reject ideal types of the history of religion in general, but he would also be critical of ideal types of very specific phenomena, such as an individual’s religious experience. Rather, ideal types are developed of intermediate phenomena such as Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and Baptism.

Although ideal types are to be derived from the real world, they are not to be mirror images of that world. Rather, they are to be one-sided exaggerations (based on the researcher’s interests) of the essence of what goes on in the real world. In Weber’s view, the more exaggerated the ideal type, the more useful it will be for historical research.

The use of the word ideal or utopia should not be construed to mean that the concept being described is in any sense the best of all possible worlds. As used by Weber, the term meant that the form

described in the concept was rarely, if ever, found in the real world. In fact, Weber argued that the ideal type need not be positive or correct; it can just as easily be negative or even morally repugnant.

Ideal types should make sense in themselves, the meaning of their components should be compatible, and they should aid us in making sense of the real world. Although we have come to think of ideal types as describing static entities, Weber believed that they could describe either static or dynamic entities. Thus we can have an ideal type of a structure, such as a bureaucracy, or of a social development, such as bureaucratization.

Ideal types also are not developed once and for all. Because society is constantly changing, and the interests of social scientists are as well, it is necessary to develop new typologies to fit the changing reality. This is in line with Weber's view that there can be no timeless concepts in the social sciences.

Although I have presented a relatively unambiguous image of the ideal type, there are contradictions in the way Weber defined the concept. In addition, in his own substantive work, Weber used the ideal type in ways that differed from the ways he said it was to be used. As Burger noted, "The ideal types presented in *Economy and Society* are a mixture of definitions, classification, and specific hypotheses seemingly too divergent to be reconcilable with Weber's statements". Although she disagrees with Burger on Weber's inconsistency in defining ideal types, Hekman also recognizes that Weber offers several varieties of ideal types:

1. Historical ideal types. These relate to phenomena found in some particular historical epoch (for example, the modern capitalistic marketplace).
2. General sociological ideal types. These relate to phenomena that cut across a number of historical periods and societies (for example, bureaucracy).
3. Action ideal types. These are pure types of action based on the motivations of the actor (for example, affectual action).
4. Structural ideal types. These are forms taken by the causes and consequences of social action (for example, traditional domination).

Clearly Weber developed an array of varieties of ideal types, and some of the richness in his work stems from their diversity, although common to them all is their mode of construction.

Kalberg argues that while the heuristic use of ideal types in empirical research is important, it should not be forgotten that they also play a key theoretical role in Weber's work. Although Weber rejects the idea of theoretical laws, he does use ideal types in various ways to create theoretical models. Thus, ideal types constitute the theoretical building blocks for the construction of a variety of theoretical models (for example, the routinization of charisma and the rationalization of society— both of which are discussed later in this chapter), and these models are then used to analyze specific historical developments.

Structures of Authority

Weber's sociological interest in the structures of authority was motivated, at least in part, by his political interests. Weber was no political radical; in fact, he was often called the "bourgeois Marx" to reflect the similarities in the intellectual interests of Marx and Weber as well as their very different political orientations. Although Weber was almost as critical of modern capitalism as Marx was, he did not advocate revolution. He wanted to change society gradually, not overthrow it. He had little faith in the ability of the masses to create a "better" society. But Weber also saw little hope in the middle classes, which he felt were dominated by shortsighted, petty bureaucrats. Weber was critical of authoritarian political leaders like Bismarck. Nevertheless, for Weber the hope—if indeed he had any hope—lay with the great political leaders rather than with the masses or the bureaucrats. Along with his faith in political leaders went his unswerving nationalism. He placed the nation above all else: "The vital interests of the nation stand, of course, above democracy and parliamentarianism". Weber preferred democracy as a political form not because he believed in the masses but because it offered maximum dynamism and the best milieu to generate political leaders. Weber noted that authority structures exist in every social institution, and his political views were related to his analysis of these structures in all settings. Of course, they were most relevant to his views on the polity.

Weber began his analysis of authority structures in a way that was consistent with his assumptions about the nature of action. He defined domination as the "probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons". Domination can have a variety of bases, legitimate as well as illegitimate, but what mainly interested Weber were the legitimate forms of domination, or what he called authority. What concerned Weber, and what played a central role in much of his sociology, were the three bases on which authority is made legitimate to followers—rational, traditional, and charismatic. In defining these three bases, Weber remained fairly close to his ideas on individual action, but he rapidly moved to the large-scale structures of authority.

Authority legitimized on rational grounds rests "on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands". Authority legitimized on traditional grounds is based on "an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them". Finally, authority legitimized by charisma rests on the devotion of followers to the exceptional sanctity, exemplary character, heroism, or special powers (for example, the ability to work miracles) of leaders, as well as on the normative order sanctioned by them. All these modes of legitimizing authority clearly imply individual actors, thought processes (beliefs), and actions. But from this point, Weber, in his thinking about authority, did move quite far from an individual action base, as we will see when we discuss the authority structures erected on the basis of these types of legitimacy.

Rational-Legal Authority

Rational-legal authority can take a variety of structural forms, but the form that most interested Weber was bureaucracy, which he considered "the purest type of exercise of legal authority".

Ideal-Typical Bureaucracy Weber depicted bureaucracies in ideal-typical terms:

From a purely technical point of view, a bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability. It thus makes possible a particularly high degree of calculability of

results for the heads of the organization and for those acting in relation to it. It is finally superior both in intensive efficiency and in the scope of its operations and is formally capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks.

Despite his discussion of the positive characteristics of bureaucracies, here and elsewhere in his work, there is a fundamental ambivalence in his attitude toward them. Although he detailed their advantages, he was well aware of their problems. Weber expressed various reservations about bureaucratic organizations. For example, he was cognizant of the “red tape” that often makes dealing with bureaucracies so trying and so difficult. His major fear, however, was that the rationalization that dominates all aspects of bureaucratic life was a threat to individual liberty. As Weber put it:

No machinery in the world functions so precisely as this apparatus of men and, moreover, so cheaply. . . . Rational calculation . . . reduces every worker to a cog in this bureaucratic machine and, seeing himself in this light, he will merely ask how to transform himself into a somewhat bigger cog. . . . The passion for bureaucratization drives us to despair.

Weber was appalled by the effects of bureaucratization and, more generally, of the rationalization of the world of which bureaucratization is but one component, but he saw no way out. He described bureaucracies as “escape proof,” “practically unshatterable” and among the hardest institutions to destroy once they are established. Along the same lines, he felt that individual bureaucrats could not “squirm out” of the bureaucracy once they were “harnessed” in it. Weber concluded that “the future belongs to bureaucratization”, and time has borne out his prediction.

Weber would say that his depiction of the advantages of bureaucracy is part of his ideal-typical image of the way it operates. The ideal-typical bureaucracy is a purposeful exaggeration of the rational characteristics of bureaucracies. Such an exaggerated model is useful for heuristic purposes and for studies of organizations in the real world, but it is not to be mistaken for a realistic depiction of the way bureaucracies actually operate.

Weber distinguished the ideal-typical bureaucracy from the ideal-typical bureaucrat. He conceived of bureaucracies as structures and of bureaucrats as positions within those structures. He did not, as his action orientation might lead us to expect, offer a social psychology of organizations or of the individuals who inhabit those bureaucracies.

The ideal-typical bureaucracy is a type of organization. Its basic units are offices organized in a hierarchical manner with rules, functions, written documents, and means of compulsion. All these are, to varying degrees, large-scale structures that represent the thrust of Weber’s thinking. He could, after all, have constructed an idealtypical bureaucracy that focused on the thoughts and actions of individuals within the bureaucracy. There is a whole school of thought in the study of organizations that focuses precisely on this level rather than on the structures of bureaucracies.

The following are the major characteristics of the ideal-typical bureaucracy:

1. It consists of a continuous organization of official functions (offices) bound by rules.
2. Each office has a specified sphere of competence. The office carries with it a set of obligations to perform various functions, the authority to carry out these functions, and the means of compulsion required to do the job.
3. The offices are organized into a hierarchical system.
4. The offices may carry with them technical qualifications that require that the participants obtain suitable training.

5. The staff that fills these offices does not own the means of production associated with them; staff members are provided with the use of those things that they need to do the job.
6. The incumbent is not allowed to appropriate the position; it always remains part of the organization.
7. Administrative acts, decisions, and rules are formulated and recorded in writing.

Any Alternatives? A bureaucracy is one of the rational structures that is playing an ever-increasing role in modern society, but one may wonder whether there is any alternative to the bureaucratic structure. Weber's clear and unequivocal answer was that there is no possible alternative: "The needs of mass administration make it today completely indispensable. The choice is only between bureaucracy and dilettantism in the field of administration".

Although we might admit that bureaucracy is an intrinsic part of modern capitalism, we might ask whether a socialist society might be different. Is it possible to create a socialist society without bureaucracies and bureaucrats? Once again, Weber was unequivocal: "When those subject to bureaucratic control seek to escape the influence of existing bureaucratic apparatus, this is normally possible only by creating an organization of their own which is equally subject to the process of bureaucratization". In fact, Weber believed that in the case of socialism we would see an increase, not a decrease, in bureaucratization. If socialism were to achieve a level of efficiency comparable to capitalism, "it would mean a tremendous increase in the importance of professional bureaucrats". In capitalism, at least the owners are not bureaucrats and therefore would be able to restrain the bureaucrats, but in socialism, even the top-level leaders would be bureaucrats. Weber thus believed that even with its problems "capitalism presented the best chances for the preservation of individual freedom and creative leadership in a bureaucratic world". We are once again at a key theme in Weber's work: his view that there is really no hope for a better world. Socialists can, in Weber's view, only make things worse by expanding the degree of bureaucratization in society. Weber noted: "Not summer's bloom lies ahead of us, but rather a polar night of icy darkness and hardness, no matter which group may triumph externally now".

Any Hope? A ray of hope in Weber's work—and it is a small one—is that professionals who stand outside the bureaucratic system can control it to some degree. In this category, Weber included professional politicians, scientists, intellectuals and even capitalists, as well as the supreme heads of the bureaucracies. For example, Weber said that politicians "must be the countervailing force against bureaucratic domination". His famous essay "Politics as a Vocation" is basically a plea for the development of political leaders with a calling to oppose the rule of bureaucracies and of bureaucrats. But in the end these appear to be rather feeble hopes. In fact, a good case can be made that these professionals are simply another aspect of the rationalization process and that their development serves only to accelerate that process.

In "Weber's Churches and Sects in North America: An Ecclesiastical SocioPolitical Sketch", Colin Loader and Jeffrey Alexander see a forerunner of Weber's thoughts on the hope provided by an ethic of responsibility in the face of the expansion of bureaucratization. American sects such as the Quakers practice an ethic of responsibility by combining rationality and larger values. Rogers Brubaker defines the ethic of responsibility as "the passionate commitment to ultimate values with the dispassionate analysis of alternative means of pursuing them". He contrasts this to the ethic of conviction, in which a rational choice of means is foregone and the actor orients "his action to the realization of some absolute value or unconditional demand". The ethic of conviction often involves a withdrawal from the rational world, whereas the ethic of responsibility involves a struggle within that world for greater

humanness. The ethic of responsibility provides at least a modicum of hope in the face of the onslaught of rationalization and bureaucratization.

Traditional Authority

Whereas rational-legal authority stems from the legitimacy of a rational-legal system, traditional authority is based on a claim by the leaders, and a belief on the part of the followers, that there is virtue in the sanctity of age-old rules and powers. The leader in such a system is not a superior but a personal master. The administrative staff, if any, consists not of officials but mainly of personal retainers. In Weber's words, "Personal loyalty, not the official's impersonal duty, determines the relations of the administrative staff to the master" (1921/1968:227). Although the bureaucratic staff owes its allegiance and obedience to enacted rules and to the leader, who acts in their name, the staff of the traditional leader obeys because the leader carries the weight of tradition—he or she has been chosen for that position in the traditional manner.

Weber was interested in the staff of the traditional leader and how it measured up to the ideal-typical bureaucratic staff. He concluded that it was lacking on a number of counts. The traditional staff lacks offices with clearly defined spheres of competence that are subject to impersonal rules. It also does not have a rational ordering of relations of superiority and inferiority; it lacks a clear hierarchy. There is no regular system of appointment and promotion on the basis of free contracts. Technical training is not a regular requirement for obtaining a position or an appointment. Appointments do not carry with them fixed salaries paid in money.

Weber also used his ideal-type methodology to analyze historically the different forms of traditional authority. He differentiated between two very early forms of traditional authority. A gerontocracy involves rule by elders, whereas primary patriarchy involves leaders who inherit their positions. Both of these forms have a supreme chief but lack an administrative staff. A more modern form is patrimonialism, which is traditional domination with an administration and a military force that are purely personal instruments of the master. Still more modern is feudalism, which limits the discretion of the master through the development of more routinized, even contractual, relationships between leader and subordinate. This restraint, in turn, leads to more stabilized power positions than exist in patrimonialism. All four of these forms may be seen as structural variations of traditional authority, and all of them differ significantly from rational-legal authority.

Weber saw structures of traditional authority, in any form, as barriers to the development of rationality. This is our first encounter with an overriding theme in Weber's work—factors that facilitate or impede the development of (formal) rationality. Over and over we find Weber concerned, as he was here, with the structural factors conducive to rationality in the Western world and the structural and cultural impediments to the development of a similar rationality throughout the rest of the world. In this specific case, Weber argued that the structures and practices of traditional authority constitute a barrier to the rise of rational economic structures—in particular, capitalism—as well as to various other components of a rational society. Even patrimonialism—a more modern form of traditionalism—while permitting the development of certain forms of "primitive" capitalism, does not allow for the rise of the highly rational type of capitalism characteristic of the modern West.

Charismatic Authority

Charisma is a concept that has come to be used very broadly. The news media and the general public are quick to point to a politician, a movie star, or a rock musician as a charismatic individual. By this they most often mean that the person in question is endowed with extraordinary qualities. The concept of charisma plays an important role in the work of Max Weber, but his conception of it was very different from that held by most laypeople today. Although Weber did not deny that a charismatic leader may have outstanding characteristics, his sense of charisma was more dependent on the group of disciples and the way that they define the charismatic leader (D. N. Smith, 1998). To put Weber's position bluntly, if the disciples define a leader as charismatic, then he or she is likely to be a charismatic leader irrespective of whether he or she actually possesses any outstanding traits. A charismatic leader, then, can be someone who is quite ordinary. What is crucial is the process by which such a leader is set apart from ordinary people and treated as if endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least exceptional powers or qualities that are not accessible to the ordinary person.

Charisma and Revolution To Weber, charisma was a revolutionary force, one of the most important revolutionary forces in the social world. Whereas traditional authority clearly is inherently conservative, the rise of a charismatic leader may well pose a threat to that system (as well as to a rational-legal system) and lead to a dramatic change in that system. What distinguishes charisma as a revolutionary force is that it leads to changes in the minds of actors; it causes a "subjective or internal reorientation." Such changes may lead to "a radical alteration of the central attitudes and direction of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward different problems of the world". Although Weber was here addressing changes in the thoughts and actions of individuals, such changes are clearly reduced to the status of dependent variables. Weber focused on changes in the structure of authority, that is, the rise of charismatic authority. When such a new authority structure emerges, it is likely to change people's thoughts and actions dramatically.

The other major revolutionary force in Weber's theoretical system, and the one with which he was much more concerned, is (formal) rationality. Whereas charisma is an internal revolutionary force that changes the minds of actors, Weber saw (formal) rationality as an external revolutionary force changing the structures of society first and then ultimately the thoughts and actions of individuals. There is more to be said about rationality as a revolutionary force later, but this closes the discussion of charisma as a revolutionary factor because Weber had very little to say about it. Weber was interested in the revolutionary character of charisma as well as its structure and the necessity that its basic character be transformed and routinized in order for it to survive as a system of authority.

Charismatic Organizations and the Routinization of Charisma In his analysis of charisma, Weber began, as he did with traditional authority, with the ideal-typical bureaucracy. He sought to determine to what degree the structure of charismatic authority, with its disciples and staff, differs from the bureaucratic system. Compared to that of the ideal-typical bureaucracy, the staff of the charismatic leader is lacking on virtually all counts. The staff members are not technically trained but are chosen instead for their possession of charismatic qualities or, at least, of qualities similar to those possessed by the charismatic leader. The offices they occupy form no clear hierarchy. Their work does not constitute a career, and there are no promotions, clear appointments, or dismissals. The charismatic leader is free to intervene whenever he or she feels that the staff cannot handle a situation. The organization has no formal rules, no established administrative organs, and no precedents to guide new judgments. In these and other ways, Weber found the staff of the charismatic leader to be "greatly inferior" to the staff in a bureaucratic form of organization.

Weber's interest in the organization behind the charismatic leader and the staff that inhabits it led him to the question of what happens to charismatic authority when the leader dies. After all, a charismatic system is inherently fragile; it would seem to be able to survive only as long as the charismatic leader lives. But is it possible for such an organization to live after the leader dies? The answer to this question is of the greatest consequence to the staff members of the charismatic leader, for they are likely to live on after the leader dies. They are also likely to have a vested interest in the continued existence of the organization: if the organization ceases to exist, they are out of work. Thus the challenge for the staff is to create a situation in which charisma in some adulterated form persists even after the leader's death. It is a difficult struggle because, for Weber, charisma is by its nature unstable; it exists in its pure form only as long as the charismatic leader lives.



Routinization of charisma: Many Indians see Priyanka Gandhi as carrying the charisma of her grandmother, Indira Gandhi

In order to cope with the departure of the charismatic leader, the staff (as well as the followers) may adopt a variety of strategies to create a more lasting organization. The staff may search out a new charismatic leader, but even if the search is successful, the new leader is unlikely to have the same aura as his or her predecessor. A set of rules also may be developed that allows the group to identify future charismatic leaders. But such rules rapidly become tradition, and what was charismatic leadership is on the way toward becoming traditional authority. In any case, the nature of leadership is radically changed as the purely personal character of charisma is eliminated. Still another technique is to allow the charismatic leader to designate his or her successor and thereby to transfer charisma symbolically to the next in line. Again it is questionable whether this is ever very successful or whether it can be successful in the long run. Another strategy is having the staff designate a successor and having its choice accepted by the larger community. The staff could also create ritual tests, with the new charismatic leader being the one who successfully undergoes the tests. However, all these

efforts are doomed to failure. In the long run, charisma cannot be routinized and still be charisma; it must be transformed into either traditional or rational-legal authority (or into some sort of institutionalized charisma like the Catholic Church).

Indeed, we find a basic theory of history in Weber's work. If successful, charisma almost immediately moves in the direction of routinization. But once routinized, charisma is en route to becoming either traditional or rational-legal authority. Once it achieves one of those states, the stage is set for the cycle to begin all over again. However, despite a general adherence to a cyclical theory, Weber believed that a basic change has occurred in the modern world and that we are more and more likely to see charisma routinized in the direction of rational-legal authority. Furthermore, he saw rational systems of authority as stronger and as increasingly impervious to charismatic movements. The modern, rationalized world may well mean the death of charisma as a significant revolutionary force (Seligman, 1993). Weber contended that rationality—not charisma—is the most irresistible and important revolutionary force in the modern world.

Types of Authority and the “Real World”

In this section, the three types of authority are discussed as ideal types, but Weber was well aware that in the real world, any specific form of authority involves a combination of all three. Thus we can think of Franklin D. Roosevelt as a president of the United States who ruled on all three bases. He was elected president in accordance with a series of rational-legal principles. By the time he was elected president for the fourth time, a good part of this rule had traditional elements. Finally, many disciples and followers regarded him as a charismatic leader (McCann).

Although the three forms of authority are presented here as parallel structures, in the real world there is constant tension and, sometimes, conflict among them. The charismatic leader is a constant threat to the other forms of authority. Once in power, the charismatic leader must address the threat posed to him or her by the other two forms. Even if charismatic authority is successfully routinized, there then arises the problem of maintaining its dynamism and its original revolutionary qualities. Then there is the conflict produced by the constant development of rational-legal authority and the threat it poses to the continued existence of the other forms. If Weber was right, however, we might face a future in which the tension among the three forms of authority is eliminated, a world of the uncontested hegemony of the rational-legal system. This is the “iron cage” of a totally rationalized society that worried Weber so much. In such a society, the only hope lies with isolated charismatic individuals who manage somehow to avoid the coercive power of society. But a small number of isolated individuals hardly represent a significant hope in the face of an increasingly powerful bureaucratic machine.

CRITICISM OF WEBER'S THEORY OF AUTHORITY

His theory of authority is criticised on various grounds

I. Weber's conception of authority is primarily criticised for the anomaly in Ideal Types of social action and Ideal Types of authority. He mentions four types of social actions, but mentions only three types of authority.

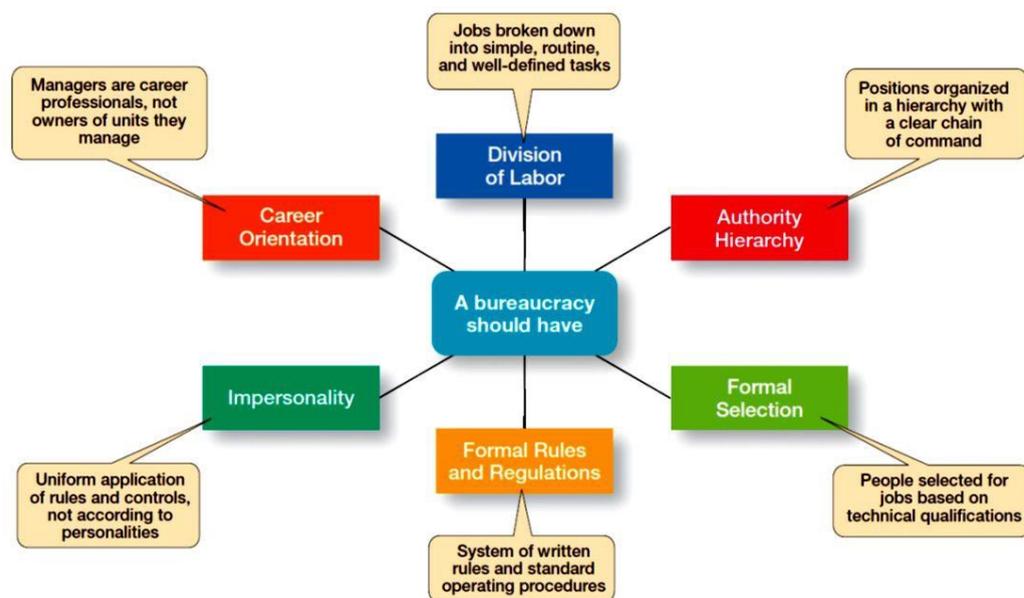
II. Michel Foucault has argued that authority and power don t lie with particular institutions and persons, as Weber suggested. Power is highly dispersed in society and operates at all levels in different situations.

III. According to Robert Dahl, authority is situational and one may hold different kinds of authority. It is also relative. One may be in a controlling position in one instance and may be controlled by others in another instance.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy, like his many other concepts, is also linked to the Ideal Type construct and Weber associated it with the rising rationalization of society. It is an Ideal Type of organisation in which, structure is based on legal rational authority. According to Weber, bureaucracy is a type of organisation which suits most of the modern societies where work is done rationally. It is a hierarchical organisation, designed rationally to coordinate the work many individuals, in the pursuit of large scale administrative tasks and organizational goals. Capitalism, which is the basis of economy in the modern world also works on rational organisation and it requires bureaucratic organisations for its working. According to him, from a purely technical point of view, a bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense, formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability. It thus, makes possible, a particularly high degree of calculability of results, for the heads of the organisation and for those acting in relation to it.

Characteristics of Weber's Bureaucracy



Weber distinguished the ideal-typical of bureaucracy from the ideal-typical bureaucrat. He conceived bureaucracies as structures and bureaucrats as positions within those structures.

According to Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters, in their Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations in Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification, 2015, Weber specified certain typical, elements associated with the bureaucracy, like -

I. Bureaucracy works on the basis of written legal rational rules. Activities of bureaucrats are in the form of official duty.

II. There is a hierarchy of officials in authority.

III. Work is specialized in bureaucracy and staff is trained accordingly.

IV. Bureaucrats are permanent and paid and they may have to work overtime.

V. Office work is vocation for bureaucrats and they are expected to do their work honestly.

VI. The incumbent is not allowed to appropriate the position. Position always remains a part of the organisation.

VII. Administrative acts, decisions, and rules are formulated and recorded in writing.

This Ideal Type bureaucracy is only approximated in reality, but Weber argues that bureaucracies of modern societies are slowly moving towards this pure type as this type of organisation has technical superiority over other types of organisations.

Weber had certain skepticism also about bureaucracy and despite it being most efficient type of organisation, Weber foresaw it as a source of alienation of human being. He referred it as iron cage of rationality which makes human beings, slave of rationality, who cannot escape it as they get too addicted to it. His major fear was that the rationalization that dominates all aspects of bureaucratic life was a threat to individual liberty and creativity. He described bureaucracies as escape proof, practically unshatterable and among the hardest institutions to destroy once they are established. Unlike Marx, he didn't see future in terms of dictatorship of proletariat, but in terms of dictatorship of officials.

Weber's concept of bureaucracy attracted wide criticism. Roberto Michels, in his Political Parties, 1911, said that bureaucracy becomes so dominating in democracy, that it reduces a democracy into an oligarchy. Bureaucratic institutions were criticised for reducing human beings as simply cogs in the organizational machines. Others also claimed that this conception of pure legal rational institutions was utopian as humans cannot be totally rational. Organisations need flexible behaviour to deal with uncertain events and bureaucratic structures cannot provide such flexibility.

Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism

Weber's theory of Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism is contained in his *The Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism*, 1904, widely known for its use of scientific methods in Sociology, possibility of studying macro phenomenon in terms of micro and a demonstration of his idea of causal pluralism or probabalism, as he factored in political, economic and religious factors in the rise of capitalism. His study of capitalism is that of modern capitalism and, unlike Marx who gave primacy to economic structure and material aspects, Weber put more emphasis on ideas leading to an economic system. He was concerned with Protestantism, mainly as a system of ideas, and its impact on the rise of another system of ideas, the spirit of capitalism, and ultimately on a capitalist economic system.

His analysis starts with an observation - 'In modern Europe, business leaders, owners of capital as well as higher grades of skilled labourer and even more, the higher technologically and commercially trained personnel of modern enterprise are predominantly protestant. Further, he observes that, it is not only a contemporary fact, but also a historical fact. The individuals in this statement are representatives of capitalism in Europe. In contrast to feudal mode, which was represented by aristocracy, capitalism was represented by the entrepreneurs and skilled personnel. This observation led Weber to ponder over if there is any correlation between Protestantism and Capitalism?

Functionalists and Marxists emphasise the role of religion in promoting social integration and impeding social change. In contrast, Weber argued that in some circumstances religion can lead to social change: although shared religious beliefs might integrate a social group, those same beliefs may have repercussions which in the long term can produce changes in society.

Marx is generally regarded as a materialist. He believed that the material world (and particularly people's involvement with nature as they worked to secure their own survival) shaped people's beliefs. Thus, to Marx, the economic system largely determined the beliefs that were held by individuals. In Marxist terms, the mode of production determined the type of religion that would be dominant in any society.

Unlike Marx, Weber rejected the view that religion is always shaped by economic factors. He held that in certain times and places, economic forces may largely shape religion, but that this is not always the case. Under certain conditions reverse can occur, that is, religious beliefs can be a major influence on economic behaviour.

Weber's social action theory argues that human action is directed by meanings and motives. From this perspective, action can only be understood by appreciating worldview or the image or picture of the world held by members of society. From their worldview, individuals attribute meanings, purposes and motives that direct their actions. Religion is often an important component of a worldview. In certain places and times, religious meaning and purposes can direct action in a wide range of contexts, including economic action.

Capitalism and ascetic Protestantism

In his most famous book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber examines the relationship between the rise of certain forms of Protestantism and the development of Western industrial capitalism. In the first part of his argument Weber tries to demonstrate that a particular form

of Protestantism, ascetic Calvinist Protestantism, preceded the development of capitalism. He also tries to show that capitalism developed initially in areas where this religion was influential. Other areas of the world possessed many of the prerequisites, yet they were not among the first areas to develop capitalism. For example, India and China had technological knowledge, labour to be hired, and individuals engaged in making money. What they lacked, according to Weber, was a religion that encouraged and facilitated the development of capitalism.

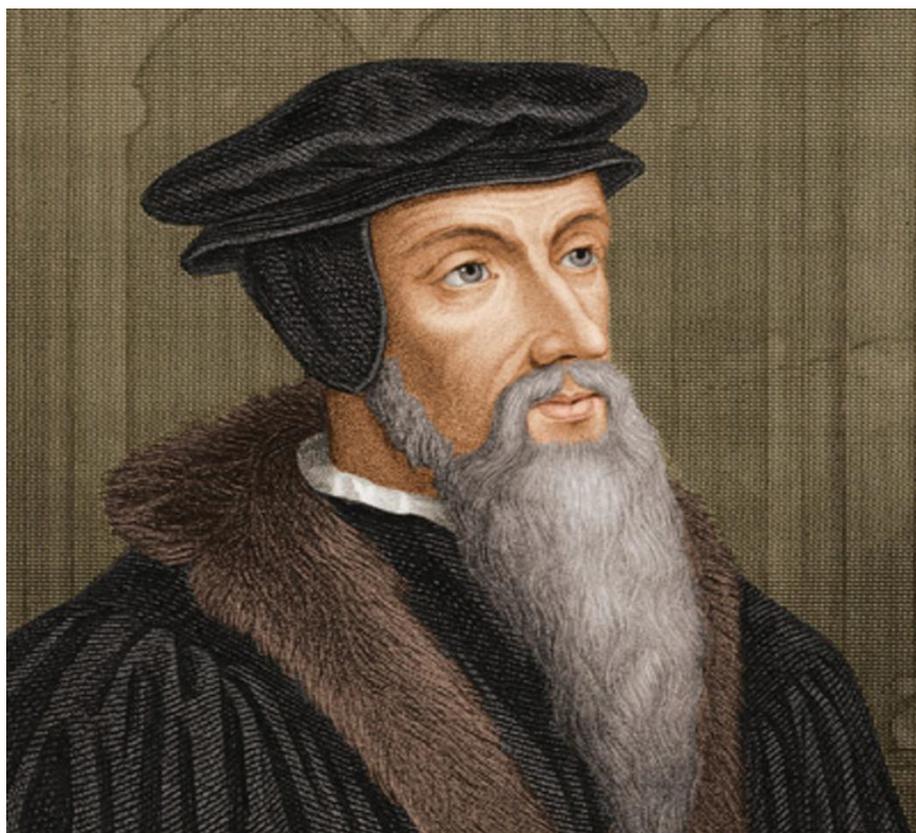
The first capitalist nations emerged among the countries of Western Europe and North America that had Calvinist religious groups. Furthermore, most of the earliest capitalist entrepreneurs in these areas were Calvinists. Having established a relationship a correlation between Calvinism and capitalism by comparing religion and economic development in different parts of the world, Weber goes on to explain how and why this type of religion was linked to capitalism.

Calvinist Protestantism originated in the beliefs of John Calvin in the 17th century. Calvin thought there was a distinct group of the elect those chosen to go to heaven and that they had been chosen by God even before they were born. Those who were not among the elect could never go to heaven, however well they behaved on earth.

Other versions of Christianity derived from the beliefs of Martin Luther. Luther believed that individual Christians could affect their chances of reaching heaven by the way that they behaved on earth. It was very important for Christians to develop faith in God, and to act out God's will on earth. In order to do this they had to be dedicated to their calling in life. Whatever position in society God had given them, they must conscientiously carry out the appropriate duties. At first sight, Lutheranism seems the doctrine more likely to produce capitalism. However, it encouraged people to produce or earn no more than was necessary for their material needs. It attached more importance to piety and faith than to the accumulation of great wealth.

The doctrine of predestination advocated by Calvin seems less likely to produce capitalism. If certain individuals were destined for heaven regardless of their earthly behaviour and the rest were equally unable to overcome their damnation there would be little point in hard work on earth.

Weber points out, though, that Calvinists had a psychological problem: they did not know whether they were among the elect. They suffered from a kind of inner loneliness or uncertainty about their status, and their behaviour was not an attempt to earn a place in heaven, but rather to convince themselves that they had been chosen to go there. They reasoned that only the chosen people of God would be able to live a good life on earth. If their behaviour was exemplary they could feel confident that they would go to heaven after death. Therefore, the interpretation that the Calvinists put on the doctrine of predestination contributed to them becoming the first capitalists.



JOHN CALVIN

The Protestant ethic

The Protestant ethic developed first in 17th-century Western Europe. The ethic was ascetic, encouraging abstinence from life's pleasures, an austere lifestyle and rigorous self-discipline.

It produced individuals who worked hard in their careers or callings, in a single-minded manner. Making money was a concrete indication of success in one's calling, which meant that the individual had not lost grace in God's sight.

John Wesley, a leader of the great Methodist revival that preceded the expansion of English industry at the close of the 18th century, wrote: For religion must necessarily produce industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. We must exhort all Christians to gain what they can and to save all they can; that is, in effect to grow rich.

These riches could not be spent on luxuries, fine clothes, lavish houses and frivolous entertainment, but in the glory of God. In effect, this meant being even more successful in terms of one's calling, which in practice meant reinvesting profits in the business.

The Protestants attacked time-wasting, laziness, idle gossip and more sleep than was necessary (six to eight hours a day at the most). They frowned on sexual pleasures; sexual intercourse should remain within marriage and then only for the procreation of children (a vegetable diet and cold baths were sometimes recommended to remove temptation). Sport and recreation were accepted only for improving fitness and health, and condemned if pursued for entertainment. The impulsive fun and enjoyment of the pub, dance hall, theatre and gaming house were prohibited to ascetic Protestants. In

fact, anything that might divert or distract people from their calling was condemned. Living life in terms of these guidelines was an indication that the individual had not lost grace and favour in the sight of God.

The spirit of capitalism

Weber claimed that the origins of the spirit of capitalism were to be found in the ethic of ascetic Protestantism. Throughout history there had been no shortage of those who sought money and profit: pirates, prostitutes and money lenders in every corner of the world had always pursued wealth. However, according to Weber, both the manner and purpose of their pursuit of money were at odds with the spirit of capitalism.

Traditionally, money seekers engaged in speculative projects: they gambled in order to gain rewards. If successful, they tended to spend money frivolously on personal consumption. They were not dedicated to making money for its own sake. Weber argued that labourers who had earned enough for their family to live comfortably, and merchants who had secured the luxuries they desired, would feel no need to push themselves harder to make more money. Instead, they sought free time for leisure.

The ascetic Protestant had a very different attitude to wealth, and Weber believed this attitude was characteristic of capitalism. He argued that the essence of capitalism is 'the pursuit of profit and forever renewed profit'.

Capitalist enterprises are organised on rational bureaucratic lines. Business transactions are conducted in a systematic and rational manner, with costs and projected profits being carefully assessed.

Underlying the practice of capitalism is the spirit of capitalism a set of ideas, ethics and values. Weber illustrates the spirit of capitalism with quotes from two books by Benjamin Franklin, *Necessary Hints to Those that Would be Rich* (1736) and *Advice to a Young Tradesman* (1748). Franklin writes: 'Remember that time is money. Time wasting, idleness and diversion lose money. Remember that credit is money. A reputation for 'prudence and honesty' will bring credit, as will paying debts on time. Business people should behave with 'industry and frugality' and punctuality and justice in all their dealings.'

Weber argued that this spirit of capitalism is not simply a way of making money, but a way of life which has ethics, duties and obligations. He claimed that ascetic Protestantism was a vital influence in the creation and development of the spirit and practice of capitalism: a methodical and single-minded pursuit of a calling encourages rational capitalism. Weber wrote: restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of the spirit of capitalism. Making money became both a religious and a business ethic. The Protestant 'interpretation of profit-making justified the activities of the businessman'.

Weber claimed that Protestantism encouraged two major features of capitalist industry: the standardization of production and the specialized division of labour. The Protestant 'uniformity of life immensely aids the capitalist in the standardization of production'. The emphasis on the importance of a fixed calling provided an ethical justification for this modern specialized division of labour'.

Finally, Weber noted the importance of the creation of wealth and the restrictions on spending it, which encouraged saving and reinvestment:

When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable result is obvious: accumulation of capital through an ascetic compulsion to save. The restraints that were imposed on the consumption of wealth naturally served to increase it, by making possible the productive investment of capital.

The ascetic Protestant way of life led to the accumulation of capital, investment and reinvestment. It produced the early businesses that expanded to create capitalist society.

Religion in non-Protestant societies

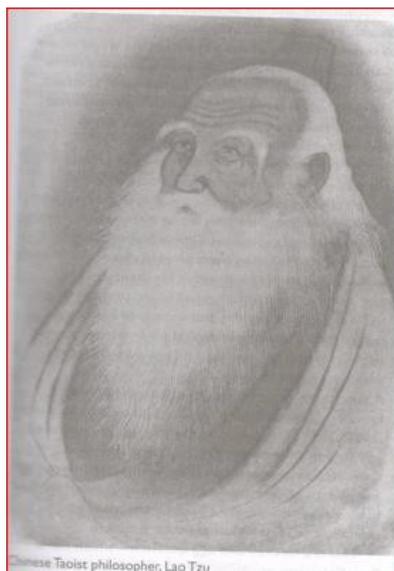
Weber did not confine his writings on religion to Protestant societies. He also examined the nature of other major world religions apart from Christianity and made comparisons between them in order to understand the relationship between religion and changes in society.

Weber argued that religions could adopt two types of orientations towards the world. Salvation could be achieved either through engagement with the world (inner-worldly), or through withdrawal from the world or indifference to the world (outer-worldly). You could also seek salvation through an active pursuit of godliness (or, in Weber’s terms, being ascetic) or through passive resignation and acceptance (which Weber calls being mystical). This provides four possible types of religions, each adopting a different worldview and set of beliefs about religiosity.

	Mysticism (passive resignation)	Asceticism (activity)
Ausserwelthche (outside the world)	Other-worldly mysticism, e.g. Buddhism	Other-worldly asceticism, e.g. Roman Catholic monasticism
Innerweltliche (inside the world)	Inner-worldly mysticism, e.g. Taoism in China	Inner-worldly asceticism, e.g. Calvinist Protestantism

Mystical religions tend to be dominant in the East. Buddhism, with its emphasis on meditation, involves 'the cool and proud emancipation of the individual from life. Through inner reflection, it encourages a sense of indifference to material possessions in favour of the inner life of the individual. As such, it is unlikely to be an agent of social change or economic development.

Taoism, a common religion in China and the basis of feng shui. is also mystical in that it involves a sense of indifference to the world. Weber says, no location for a railroad or factory could be suggested without creating some conflict with the diviners and therefore the spirits. Weber argued that this acted as a brake on capitalist development in China which was only ceased once Chinese capitalism had reached its fullest power. Taoism was certainly not conducive to producing the logical calculation characterizing capitalism.



Chinese Taoist philosopher, Lao Tzu

Catholic monasticism was ascetic and encouraged activity, including hard work, but followers believed that too much contact with the world impeded the quest for spiritual purity. With an emphasis on activity outside the world, this also was unlikely to produce social change. The same applied to Hinduism, which Weber saw as somewhat ascetic but also other-worldly. In any case, economic development was held back under Hinduism by the caste system, which prevented social mobility and therefore discouraged any entrepreneurial activity. If you were destined to stay in the same caste for life, then there was little point in trying to develop and grow a business.

Only religions that involved activity inside the world were likely to produce major social changes such as the rise of capitalism. As discussed above, Calvinist Protestantism was one such religion. Weber also saw Islam as a religion that encouraged activity inside the world and therefore had the potential to produce social change. However, he did not think it was conducive to the development of rationality. David Gellner argues that Weber believed that 'the influence of a warrior ethic prevented it from applying a full rationality'.

One religion that did have a similar ethic to Calvinist Protestantism was the Indian religion of Jainism. Jainism could potentially produce social change, but, according to Weber, the economic conditions in India were not fertile ground for the development of capitalism. For these reasons, capitalism developed first in Europe and North America.

Materialism and Weber's theory

Weber believed he had demonstrated that some religious beliefs could cause economic change. He claimed he had found a weakness in Marx's materialism, which implied that the economic system always shaped ideas.

However, Weber did not discount the importance of the economy and material factors. He said, 'It is not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Calvinist Protestantism made capitalism possible, but so did the technology and economic system of the countries in which it developed. Material factors were as important as ideas in its development; neither could be ignored in any explanation.'

Religion, modernity and rationality

As well as proposing an explanation for the origins of capitalism, Weber also had a good deal to say about the likely consequences of the changes produced by the development of Protestantism. His theories have had a tremendous influence on general ideas about changes in Western societies and in particular on the concepts of modernity and secularisation. Modernity refers to both a historical period and a type of society that is often seen as developing along with industrialisation, science and capitalism. Secularisation refers to the decline of religion. Robert Holton and Brian Turner argue that the central themes of all of Weber's sociology were the problems of modernization and modernity; and that we should regard rationalization as the process which produced modernism'.

As we have seen above, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber argued that ascetic Protestantism helped to produce modern capitalism. With that went an emphasis on rational calculation, since pursuing the maximum possible profit required an appraisal of the profits that would be produced by following different lines of action. The capitalist would then follow whatever path would produce the greatest profit.

Weber distinguished between formal rationality and substantive rationality. Formal rationality involved calculating the best means to achieve a given end, and the calculations had to be in a numerical form. Substantive rationality involved action designed to meet some ultimate goal, such as justice, equality or human happiness. Capitalist behaviour put primary emphasis upon the formal rationality of accounting in the pursuit of profit maximisation. Substantive rationality, including the morality provided by religious beliefs, tended to fade into the background in capitalist societies.

To Weber, rationality would not be confined to capitalist enterprise in the modern world. As Holton and Turner point out, it would also involve a rational legal system, the separation of the home and the workplace, rational financial management, and the emergence of a rational system of administration. Weber's ideas on bureaucracy are a good example of his belief that modern societies would be increasingly characterized by rationality. However, to Weber, and to many later sociologists, rationality can be at odds with the faith that is required by religion.

Religions do not expect their followers to try to test their beliefs scientifically, nor do they expect religious beliefs to be based upon weighing up the costs and benefits of joining a religious group. Followers should simply believe in the truth of their religion. In the rationalised modern world, though, Weber thought it would be increasingly difficult for followers of religion to maintain their faith.

The problem of maintaining faith was exacerbated by the process of disenchantment that Weber saw as another feature of the modern world. Rationalisation and the development of science led to a loss of belief in magic and supernatural methods of manipulating the world. At one time magic and religion were seen not just as beliefs but as practical ways of intervening in the world to achieve desired outcomes. In a rationalised world this was no longer tenable, and religion could only survive as a set of theoretical beliefs rather than beliefs which had practical application.

Religion could still have some appeal because the modern world lacks meaning for the individual, but disenchantment led to religion becoming separated off and less central to society. Hans Kippenberg (2009) argues that The concept of disenchantment does not indicate the rise of a godless world... But

the transformation of religion into a theoretical and practical sphere of its own, related to the unavoidable experience of a world devoid of meaning.

Nevertheless, Weber was clear that religion would lose its social significance even if it did not disappear. Discussing Protestant sects in the USA, Weber said, 'closer scrutiny revealed the steady progress of the characteristic process of secularization to which all phenomena that originated in religious conceptions succumb'. In short, ascetic Protestantism would contribute to the development of capitalism, which required a rational approach to social life, which would in turn undermine religion. Protestant religions therefore contained the seeds of their own destruction.

Some commentators on Weber have pointed to parts of his work where he appears to argue that religion would continue to have a role in modern societies but that the nature of religion would change. Kippenberg (2009), discussing a 1917 speech by Weber entitled 'Science as Vocation', argues that Weber believed that individuals might turn away from traditional religion and instead move towards developing new types of religious beliefs in which they sought meaning in their personal spiritual convictions. This would help to give a sense of meaning in a disenchanted, rationalised and increasingly secular world. Institutional religion might decline but personal religiosity and spirituality could still thrive in the private sphere of individuals' beliefs.

Critical appreciation of Weber's Protestant Ethics & Spirit of Capitalism

Since its publication, Weber's book has received both criticism and support from researchers:

1. Sombart (1907), an early critic, argued that Weber was mistaken about the beliefs held by Calvinists. According to Sombart, Calvinism was against greed and the pursuit of money for its own sake. Weber himself countered this argument. He pointed out that it was not the beliefs of Calvinists that were important in themselves. The doctrine of predestination was not intended to produce the rational pursuit of profit, but nevertheless that was one of its unintentional consequences, and the evidence lay in the way that ascetic Protestants actually behaved.
2. A second criticism points to parts of the world where Calvinism was strong, but capitalism did not develop until much later. For example, Switzerland, Scotland, Hungary and parts of the Netherlands all contained large Calvinist populations, but were not among the first capitalist countries.

Gordon Marshall (1982) dismisses this criticism. He argues that the critics demonstrate a lack of understanding of Weber's theory. Weber did not claim that Calvinism was the only factor necessary for the development of capitalism. Simply finding Calvinist countries that failed to become capitalist comparatively early cannot therefore disprove his theory. In his own study of Scotland, Marshall found that the Scots had a capitalist mentality but were held back by a lack of skilled labour and capital for investment, and by government policies that did not stimulate the development of industry.

3. A potentially more damaging criticism of Weber's theory originates from Marxist critics such as Kautsky (1953). Kautsky argues that early capitalism preceded and largely determined Protestantism. He sees Calvinism as developing in cities where commerce and early forms of industrialization were already established. In his view, Protestantism became the ideology capitalists used to legitimate their position.

This is a chicken and egg question which came first: Calvinism or capitalism? The answer depends upon how capitalism is defined. To Weber, pre-capitalist money-making ventures were not organised

rationality to ensure continued profit. Marshall (1982) disputes this. He suggests that the medieval merchant classes behaved rationally considering the conditions of the time. It was not their psychological attitude that encouraged them to make what Weber saw as risky investments, but the situation they faced. In England the risks involved in trading were balanced by investments in land. Buying landed estates was not conspicuous consumption, but the prudent spreading of investments. In the Netherlands, too, the business classes spread their risks, but more money went into merchant trading because of the price of land. Even so, defenders of Weber insist that a distinctive rational capitalist entrepreneur did not emerge until after Calvinism.

4. A fourth criticism of Weber does not deny that Calvinism was an important factor that helped lead to capitalism, but questions whether it was the religious beliefs of Calvinists that led to them becoming business people. According to this view, non-conformist Calvinists devoted themselves to business because they were excluded from holding public office and joining certain professions by law. Like the Jews in Eastern and Central Europe, they tried to become economically successful in order to overcome their political persecution.

In reply to this criticism, supporters of the Protestant ethic thesis argue that only Calvinist minorities developed the distinctive patterns of capitalist behaviour which involved rational planning for slow but sure capital growth; only they could develop capitalist businesses before capitalism was established.

Despite the considerable effort devoted to discussing Weber's theory by historians and sociologists alike, no agreement has been reached about its accuracy. Nevertheless, whatever the merit of this particular study, Weber does successfully highlight the theoretical point that ideas in this case, religious ideas can conceivably lead to economic change.

TALCOTT PARSONS

SOCIAL SYSTEM

Talcott Parsons can undoubtedly be regarded as the most outstanding exponent of the social system theory. In his "Structure of Social Action", Parsons focused on unit act but in "The Social System", emphasis shifted from unit act to institutional orders, and the system was the primary unit of analysis. However, it must be noted at the outset that Parsons' social system is a constructed type, an analytical conceptual framework, and not an empirical referent.

Parsons takes social action as the building block of the system. He prefers the term action' to behaviour because he is interested not in the physical events of behaviour for their own sake but in their patterning. Parson's sociological theories are largely based upon his conception of social action. Parsons has also given three configurations or systems of social action. Social actions according to him, are guided by the following systems: personality system, cultural system and social system. It can also be said that the scheme of three types of social action [or orientation]" serves as a background for the construction of three analytical systems: the social system, the personality system and the cultural system .

Meaning of System

Parsons has discussed the personality, the cultural and the social systems in his treatise "The Social System". It is thus necessary to know what a system is. A system is any collection of interrelated parts, objects, things or organisms.

In Parsonian language, "In general, system can be defined as a set of interdependent elements or parts that can be thought of as a whole. In this sense, we can think of a motor car or the human body as a system. As a general approach to understanding a variety of phenomena, systems theory is the study of how systems are organized, how they adapt to changing circumstances, how the interests of subsystems adjust or conflict with those of the whole, and so on.

1. Personality System

Parsons considers personality as the aspect of the living individual. Personality system is concerned with the total social actions of an individual. It must be understood in terms of the cultural and social content of all the learnt things that make up his behavioural system. Personality is autonomous as a distinct subsystem of action. Parsons also claims that the personality system is the primary meeting ground of the cultural system, the behavioural organism, and secondarily, the physical world. As **Abraham** has pointed out, "The main function of the personality system involves learning, developing, and maintaining through the life cycle an adequate level of motivation so that individuals will participate in socially valued and controlled activities. In return, society must also adequately satisfy and reward its members if it is to maintain the level of motivation and of performance. This relationship constitutes socialization, the process by which individuals become social beings. Effective process of socialization is crucial to make the individual's value commitments link primarily with the cultural system. Parsons insists that in addition to rewarding conformity and punishing deviance, motivation must be furnished at different levels.

2. Cultural System

When the individual system rises to the level of culture, it is known as cultural system. It is constituted of the normative patterns. It includes cognitive beliefs, values, norms, private moral obligations, expressive symbols which guide the choices made by the individuals. The main function of the cultural system is the legitimation of the society's normative order. Cultural value patterns provide the most direct link between the social and cultural systems in legitimizing the normative order of the society. They define what is appropriate and what is not, in accordance with the institutionalized order. It could be said that the cultural system is said to be well organized if it actively influences, guides and controls the lives of the individuals.

3. Social System

The concept of social system has been used most explicitly, and self-consciously in modern functionalism. But it was implicit as much in the 19th century social thought. A social theory which treats social relations, groups or societies as a set of interrelated parts which function to maintain some boundary or unity of the parts is based explicitly or implicitly on the concept of social system. The chief exponent of the most modern theory of 'social system' has been Talcott Parsons. Parsons has tried to give a more scientific and a rational explanation to the concept of social system his books "The Structure of Social Action" and "An Outline of the Social System".

Meaning and Definition of Social System

Parsons uses the term social system to refer to society whether it is the smallest or the largest collectivity. The social system is made up of the relationship of individuals. A simplified version of the definition of Parsons has been given by W.F.Ogburn and it is stated below:

- A social system may be defined as a plurality of individuals interacting with each other according to shared cultural norms and meanings. - W.F.Ogburn
- A social system consists of a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the " optimization of gratification and whose relation to their situation, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols.
- In simple words, the term 'social system' " basically consists of two or more individuals interact directly or indirectly in a bounded situation.

Elements or Units of Social System

The social system is constituted by the actions of individuals. It involves participation of actors in a process of interactive relationships. This participation has two main aspects : (i) the positional aspect and the processional aspect. The positional aspect indicates the location of the actor in social system which may be called his status .The processional aspect indicates the functional importance of the actor for the social system which may be called his " role".

(i) **The Act:** Social act or action is a process in the social system that motivates the individual or individuals in the case of a group. The orientation of action has a close relation with the attainment of satisfaction of the actor. The action is not an unexpected response to a particular situation or stimulus. It indicates that the actor has a system of expectations relative to his own need-arrangements. The need-arrangement system of the individual actor has two aspects: (i) the gratificational aspect, and (ii) the orientational aspect. The gratificational aspect refers to what the actor gets out of his interaction and what its costs are to him. The orientational aspect refers to the how he gets it. Both these aspects must be present in what is called a social act.

(ii) The Actor: The actor is also a significant unit of social system. It is he who holds a status and performs a role. A social system must have a sufficient proportion of its actors. These actors must be sufficiently motivated to act according to the requirements of its role system. The social system must also be adapted to the minimum needs of the individual actor. The system must secure sufficient participation of its actors also. It means, it must motivate them sufficiently to the performances which are necessary for the social system to develop or to persist. The act and actor are complementary to each other. The actor has to act according to the roles assigned to him. This he learns through the process of socialization. The social system limits and regulates the needs and also actions of the actor. This, the social system does through social control.

(iii) The Role and Status: The social system involves the participation of actor in a process of interactive relationship. This participation has two aspects: i) the role aspect, and ii) the status aspect. Role denotes the functional significance of the actor for the social system. Status denotes the place of the actor in the social system.

An actor may have a high or low status in a social system and he has a definite role to play. Different roles associated with the same status are properly integrated in the system. The actors are distributed between different roles. This process of distribution has been called by Parsons as allocation. Proper allocation of roles between actors minimizes problems for the system. The allocation of roles is related to the problem of allocation of facilities. Problem of facilities is actually the problem of power because possession of facilities means to have power-economic or political.

Thus, a social system faces the problems of proper allocation of roles, proper allocation of facilities and rewards and proper allocation of economic and political power. If this allocation is properly done it may preserve itself, otherwise, it may disintegrate.

Mechanism of Social System

Social system is a system of interdependent action processes. But the tendencies of the individuals are such that they may alter the established status of social system. This may disturb the established interaction process of the system. It is, therefore, essential that some proper mechanisms are applied for maintaining the equilibrium between the various processes of social interaction. These mechanisms have been classified by Parsons into two categories: (i) Mechanisms of socialization, and (ii) Mechanisms of social control.

(i) Socialisation: Socialisation is a process whereby an individual learns to adjust with the conventional pattern of social behaviour. He learns to adjust himself with the social situation conforming to social norms, values, and standards. This process is not confined to the child alone. It goes on throughout life. Some of the principal aspects of socialization are known as rearing, sympathy, identification, imitation, social teaching, suggestion, practice and punishment.

(ii) Social Control : Social control consists of the mechanisms whereby the society moulds its members to conform to the approved pattern of social behaviour. According to Parsons, there are two types of elements, which exist in every system. These are integrative and disintegrative. The function of social control is to eliminate those elements, which cause disintegration and create problems for integration. Besides, in every society, there is a system of rewards for conformative behaviour and punishments for deviant behaviour. Deviant behavioural tendencies may also constitute one of the principal sources of change in the structure of the social system.

FUNCTIONAL PRE-REQUISITES OF SOCIAL SYSTEM

The concept “functional pre-requisites” or “functional imperatives” constitutes an essential aspect of the functional theory. This concept refers to the basic needs of a society which have to be met if it is to continue to survive as a functioning system. Thus, from a functional perspective, societies survive and function only if certain tasks are accomplished. For example, without reproduction and socialization, there would be no supply of new members. Similarly, a system of social stratification is said to be necessary to ensure that the most able people are recruited to the most important positions, a requirement for an efficient society.

Functional theory looks upon society as a social system which is believed to perform certain functions. Parsons and his followers have given a list which they have called the functional prerequisites of any social system. They can be grouped under four recurrent functional problems which every social system must solve in its attempt to adapt itself to the basic facts of life. As mentioned by Parsons, they are: (i) pattern maintenance and tension management, (ii) adaptation, (iii) goal attainment, and (iv) integration.

1. Pattern Maintenance and Tension Management

A social system has its own patterns which must be maintained. The units of the system, that is, role-occupants or sub-groups, must learn these patterns and develop an attitude of respect towards them.

Tension Management : A human group cannot endure if it fails to meet the individual human needs of its members. The units of any system, i.e., individuals or sub-groups are subject to emotional disturbance and distractions. Man's emotional, spiritual, and cultural requirements are extremely complex. Still they must be met with or managed if the units are to be able to carry on effectively. All social systems provide for relaxation from tension by means of activities that allow a person express his or her inner feelings. For example, dance and the arts do this task. All societies provide special structural arrangements for differences in sex and also for such crucial events as births and deaths. Wherever there is social life, there are structures or patterns of leisure and recreation, crafts, art, and some form of religion expressed in myths or elaborate ritual.

2. Adaptation

Any social system must be adapted to its social and non-social environment. For a society to survive it must have a technology adequate to provide food, shelter and clothing. The economy of the society meets this need. Every permanent social system has its own division of labour. Because, for the production of goods and services, role differentiation becomes necessary. It is known that no one person can perform simultaneously all the tasks that have to be performed. The system must also provide care for the helpless young and protection against animal and human predators. Many of the structures existing in any society are designed to fulfil these essential functions.

3. Goal Attainment

Every social system has one or more goals to be attained, through co-operative effort. ‘National security’ - can be cited here as the best example of a societal goal. Adaptation to the environment, social and non-social, is necessary if goals are to be attained. Further, in accordance with the specific nature of tasks of the system, the human and non-human resources must be mobilized in some effective way. For example, in any social system there must be a proper process for determining which persons will occupy what role at what time and for what purpose. The problem of allocation of members within the social system will be solved by such a process. The rules regulating inheritance,

for example, get solved by such a process. The rules regulating inheritance, for example, solve this problem in part.

The allocation of members and the allocation of scarce resources are important for both adaptation and goal attainment. The economy of a society as a sub-system produces goods and services for various purposes. The government in complex societies, mobilizes goods and services for the attainment of specific goals of the total society. Example : A business firm may have the goal of producing steel. The goal is adaptive for the society because steel can be used for many purposes, including the purpose of other business firms. The steel company faces the adaptive problem. It means, it has to adjust to the government and to competing firms and provide itself with the necessary raw materials for its productive goals.

4. Integration

Since they live in groups, men and women must consider the needs of the group as well as their own needs. They must coordinate and integrate their actions. Integration has to do with the interrelations of units of social system, that is, individuals and groups. To some extent, the members of a system must be loyal to one another and to the system as a whole. This is a problem of solidarity and morale , Morale is important for both integration and pattern maintenance. It is closely related to common values. It is the willingness to give oneself to specific undertakings. In the routine living, the goals and interests of the whole society are not of much interest to the whole society and are not very much present in the minds of most of its members. That way, the interests of sub-groups are always remembered. But during the period of crisis such as war or revolution the goal and interest of the whole society must always dominate if the society is to survive as an independent group.

In almost every social system, some participants, including whole sub-groups, violate the norms. Since the norms fulfill some social needs, their violations are a threat to the social system. Thus, the need for social control arises. It is essential to protect the integrity of the system. Thus, the elaborate rules provide orderly procedures to determine who will occupy given sites, to control the use of force and fraud, to co-ordinate traffic, to regulate sexual behaviour, to govern the conditions of exchange, and so on.

Since the individual members are often motivated by self-interests, chances of clashes taking place between them cannot be ruled out. Sometimes, even with best morale we find threats to integration. Hence, there must be mechanism for restoring solidarity. Such mechanisms are normally operative most of the time. It must be noted that even with the well-institutionalized norms, instances of deviance do take place. The deviations may even become disruptive. Hence, there is the need for secondary mechanism of social control. Example: In the modern state, the whole apparatus of catching and rehabilitating the criminal represents such a kind of secondary mechanism.

PATTERN VARIABLES

Pattern Variables is an important concept coined by Talcott Parsons and is closely associated with his theory of social action. As Parsons says we can analyse actions, social relationships, and whole systems according to what he calls pattern variables -or choices between pairs of alternatives. Parsons notes that social interaction has a systematic character and hence he refers to it as a social system. The concept that bridges social action and social system is that of pattern variables.

Definition of Pattern Variables

- The term “pattern variables” refers to the four [sometimes five] basic pattern-alternatives of value orientation for individuals and cultures, according to Parsons.
- Pattern variables represent “ Five dichotomies or pairs of variables proposed by Talcott Parsons for the purpose of classifying types of social relationships. Each pattern variable provides two mutually exclusive alternatives, one of which must be chosen by an individual before he can act in a social situation
- The concept of pattern variables introduced by Talcott Parsons is an attempt to supply a logically exhaustive list of action dilemmas on the highest possible level of abstraction.

According to Parsons, the five pattern variables represent the basic dilemmas a person faces in orienting to another person. As per Parsons analysis, “ cultures are seen as organizing action, and actors are faced with implicit choices' in relationships, in terms of four dichotomous alternative modes of orientation to 'social objects', including other actors”. In simple words, individuals are faced with some fundamental dilemmas in their interaction and social systems offer a combination of solutions for these dilemmas.

Five Pattern Variables

Five sets of pattern variables as stated by Parsons are as follows:

1. Affectivity versus affective neutrality
2. Diffuseness versus specificity
3. Universalism versus particularism,
4. Ascription versus achievement [also as quality and performance]
5. Self-orientation versus collectivity orientation

1. Affectivity Versus Affective Neutrality

Affectivity versus affective neutrality represents one of the pattern variables proposed by Talcott Parsons. The word affectivity refers to feelings or emotions whereas affective neutrality signifies emotional neutrality or detachment. This is one of the dilemmas that the actors face. For the individual in a given situation, this is the dilemma of whether to give importance to an impulse or to the values and more distant goals. This is like the opposition between the demands of an impulse or immediate need and the possible benefits of restraint and discipline. Here, the individual has to decide whether he should opt for the immediate gratification of an impulse or need or he should abstain himself from doing it. Example: Eating a meal or watching a chess match compared with work that does not require one's emotional involvement, say, working in a garage. This pattern variable suggests that actors can either engage in a relationship for emotional reasons [affectivity] or in a relationship for instrumental reasons without the involvement of feelings [affectivity neutrality].

2. Diffuseness Versus Specificity

As per this dichotomy, actors in their relationship with others will have to choose in any situation between a totally wide range of activity [diffuseness] or a specific and a structured one [specificity].

Diffuseness' implies wide range of satisfying relationships while specificity denotes a narrower range of relationships. In confronting an object [that is, another person], an actor must choose among the various possible ranges in which he will respond to the object.

The dilemma here consists in whether the actor should respond to restricted range of them. Example : Mother-child relationship and family relationships, in general, represent diffuseness where relationships are not fixed or defined but spread about all aspects of life. On the other hand, bus conductor issuing tickets to the passenger; or the relationship between the doctor and patient-represent relationships which have only a specified and limited purpose.

3. Particularism Versus Universalism

This represents a dichotomy in social behaviour, that is concerned with the problem of whether a person in a given situation should be oriented to another person [or persons] in terms of generalized standards of behaviour or in terms of the special nature of their relationship to each other. In simple words, actors have to decide whether to judge a person by general criteria [universalism] or criteria unique to that person [particularism]. Example, Mother's relationship with the child. A mother's relationship with her child may sometimes be particularistic but at other times, involve universalistic criteria as when the child's performance is appraised at school.

4. Ascription Versus Achievement

This pattern variable has recently been called as the dichotomy between quality and performance. This pattern variable refers to the dilemma of whether to treat a person according to who he is or in terms of what he is doing, or may be expected to do in the given situation. As per this variable, actors have to decide whether to judge persons by what they do [performance] or by their personal characteristics [quality]. Example: In most societies, relationships based on inherent qualities [age, sex, caste, etc] of the individual can be considered ascriptive; while his success in business or a cricket match or in a musical career involves achievement.

5. Self-Orientation Versus Collectivity Orientation

Here the dilemma is between personal interests and group interests in social situations. For the individual in a given situation, this is the dilemma of whether to pursue his own personal interests and goals or sub-orient his private interests to the interests and welfare of a group or other individuals. This dichotomy is described by Parsons as the dilemma of private values versus collective interests, or the distribution between private permissiveness and collective obligation. This fifth variable, originally proposed by Parsons, was subsequently dropped as being of a different order from the other four.

Importance of Pattern Variables

According to Parsons, through pattern variables it is possible for us to understand the four/ five dilemmas the individuals face in orienting their relationship with others. In fact, all relationships between individuals and others can be brought under this scheme. The first four pattern variables namely, affectivity, diffuseness, particularism and ascription - bring out the broad norms of relationships among friends and close ones and they are primary in nature. By contrast, the second four variables namely, neutrality, specificity, universalism and achievement [or performance] - bring out the broad norms of secondary relationships.

It appears that Parsons' conception of pattern variables was presented by him as deriving from previous characterization of types of society such as Tonnies' distinction between Gemeinschaft and

Gesellschaft. Parsons saw his pattern variables as providing an exhaustive general statement of the fundamental dilemmas permanently facing all actors and involved in all social organizations.

Talcott Parsons' concept of pattern variables

Pattern variables A	Pattern variables B
<p>Ascription Status is ascribed; the type of family into which a person is born determines it.</p>	<p>Achievement Status is achieved through a person's own efforts: for example, through hard work.</p>
<p>Diffuseness People enter into relationships with others to satisfy a large range of needs: for example, the relationship between mother and child.</p>	<p>Specificity People enter into relationships with others to satisfy particular needs: for example, the relationship between a customer and shopkeeper</p>
<p>Particularism Individuals act differently towards particular people: for example, they are loyal to their family but not to strangers.</p>	<p>Universalism Individuals act according to universal principles: for example, everyone is equal before the law, so a policewoman would arrest her husband if necessary.</p>
<p>Affectivity Gratification is immediate. People act to gratify their desires as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Effective neutrality Gratification is deferred: for example, saving money to put a deposit on a house in the future.</p>
<p>Collective orientation People put the interests of the social groups to which they belong before their own interests.</p>	<p>Self-orientation People pursue their own interests first, rather than those of the social groups to which they belong.</p>

ROBERT K. MERTON

Biographical Sketch

Robert K. Merton was born in 1910 in Philadelphia as Meyer Robert Schkolnick into a family of Yiddish-speaking Russian Jews who had immigrated to the United States in 1904. Merton's family lived in strained circumstances after his father's shop burned down. His father later became a carpenter's assistant to support the family. Even though Merton grew up fairly poor, however, he believed that he had been afforded many opportunities.

He adopted the name Robert K. Merton initially as a stage name for his magic performances.

He started his sociological career under the guidance of George E. Simpson at Philadelphia's Temple University. Under Simpson's leadership, Merton attended an American Sociological Association meeting where he met Pitrim A. Sorokin, the founding chair of the Harvard University Sociology Department. Merton applied to Harvard and went to work as a research assistant to Sorokin.

Merton went on to graduate from Harvard with an M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology. By the end of his student career in 1938, he had already begun to embark on works that made him renowned in the sociological field, publishing his first major study, *Science, Technology, and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*, which helped create the sociology of science.

He taught at Harvard until 1938, when he became professor and chairman of the Department of Sociology at Tulane University. In 1941 he joined the Columbia University faculty, where he spent the vast majority of his teaching career. Over his five decades at Columbia University he held numerous prestigious titles. He was named to the university's highest academic rank, University Professor, in 1974 and became a Special Service Professor, a title reserved by the trustees for emeritus faculty who "render special services to the University", upon his retirement in 1979. He was an adjunct faculty member at Rockefeller University. He withdrew from teaching in 1984. In recognition of his lasting contributions to scholarship and the university, Columbia established the Robert K. Merton Professorship in the Social Sciences in 1990.

Over his career, Merton published some 50 papers in the sociology of science. Merton received many national and international honors for his research. He was one of the first sociologists elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the first American sociologist to be elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. He was also a member of the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which awarded him its Parsons Prize, the National Academy of Education and *Academica Europaea*. Merton is also credited as the creator of the focus group research method.

More than twenty universities awarded him honorary degrees, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Chicago, and abroad, the Universities of Leiden, Wales, Oslo and Kraków, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Oxford. In 1994, Merton was awarded the US National Medal of Science, for "founding the sociology of science and for his pioneering contributions to the study of social life, especially the self-fulfilling prophecy and the unintended consequences of social action". He was the first sociologist to receive the prize.

Robert Merton's Structural Functionalism

Although Talcott Parsons is the most important structural-functional theorist, his student Robert Merton authored some of the most important statements on structural functionalism in sociology. Merton criticized some of the more extreme and indefensible aspects of structural functionalism. But equally important, his new conceptual insights helped give structural functionalism a continuing usefulness.

Although both Merton and Parsons are associated with structural functionalism, there are important differences between them. For one thing, while Parsons advocated the creation of grand, overarching theories, Merton favored more limited, middle-range theories. For another, Merton was more favorable toward Marxian theories than Parsons was. In fact, Merton and some of his students (especially Alvin Gouldner) can be seen as having pushed structural functionalism more to the left politically.

A Structural-Functional Model

Merton criticized what he saw as the three basic postulates of functional analysis as it was developed by anthropologists such as Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. The first is the postulate of the functional unity of society. This postulate holds that all standardized social and cultural beliefs and practices are functional for society as a whole as well as for individuals in society. This view implies that the various parts of a social system must show a high level of integration. However, Merton maintained that although it may be true of small, primitive societies, this generalization cannot be extended to larger, more complex societies.

Universal functionalism is the second postulate. That is, it is argued that *all* standardized social and cultural forms and structures have positive functions. Merton argued that this contradicts what we find in the real world. It is clear that not every structure, custom, idea, belief, and so forth, has positive functions. For example, rabid nationalism can be highly dysfunctional in a world of proliferating nuclear arms.

Third is the postulate of indispensability. The argument here is that all standardized aspects of society not only have positive functions but also represent indispensable parts of the working whole. This postulate leads to the idea that all structures and functions are functionally necessary for society. No other structures and functions could work quite as well as those that are currently found within society. Merton's criticism, following Parsons, was that we must at least be willing to admit that there are various structural and functional alternatives to be found within society.

Merton's position was that all these functional postulates rely on nonempirical assertions based on abstract, theoretical systems. At a minimum, it is the responsibility of the sociologist to examine each empirically. Merton's belief that empirical tests, not theoretical assertions, are crucial to functional analysis led him to develop his "paradigm" of functional analysis as a guide to the integration of theory and research.

Merton made it clear from the outset that structural-functional analysis focuses on groups, organizations, societies, and cultures. He stated that any object that can be subjected to structural-functional analysis must "represent a standardized (that is, patterned and repetitive) item". He had in mind such things as "social roles, institutional patterns, social

processes, cultural patterns, culturally patterned emotions, social norms, group organization, social structure, devices for social control, etc.”.

Early structural functionalists tended to focus almost entirely on the *functions* of one social structure or institution for another. However, in Merton's view, early analysts tended to confuse the subjective motives of individuals with the functions of structures or institutions. The focus of the structural functionalist should be on social functions rather than on individual motives. *Functions*, according to Merton, are defined as “those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system” (1949/1968:105). However, there is a clear ideological bias when one focuses only on adaptation or adjustment, for they are always positive consequences. It is important to note that one social fact can have negative consequences for another social fact. To rectify this serious omission in early structural functionalism, Merton developed the idea of a *dysfunction*. Just as structures or institutions could contribute to the maintenance of other parts of the social system, they also could have negative consequences for them. Slavery in the southern United States, for example, clearly had positive consequences for white southerners, such as supplying cheap labor, support for the cotton economy, and social status. It also had dysfunctions, such as making southerners overly dependent on an agrarian economy and therefore unprepared for industrialization. The lingering disparity between the North and the South in industrialization can be traced, at least in part, to the dysfunctions of the institution of slavery in the South.

Merton also posited the idea of *nonfunctions*, which he defined as consequences that are simply irrelevant to the system under consideration. Included here might be social forms that are “survivals” from earlier historical times. Although they may have had positive or negative consequences in the past, they have no significant effect on contemporary society. One example, although a few might disagree, is the Women's Christian Temperance Movement.

To help answer the question of whether positive functions outweigh dysfunctions, or vice versa, Merton developed the concept of *net balance*. However, we never can simply add up positive functions and dysfunctions and objectively determine which outweighs the other, because the issues are so complex and are based on so much subjective judgment that they cannot be calculated and weighed easily. The usefulness of Merton's concept comes from the way it orients the sociologist to the question of relative significance. To return to the example of slavery, the question becomes whether, on balance, slavery was more functional or dysfunctional to the South. Still, this question is too broad and obscures a number of issues (for example, that slavery was functional for groups such as white slaveholders).

To cope with problems like these, Merton added the idea that there must be *levels of functional analysis*. Functionalists had generally restricted themselves to analysis of the society as a whole, but Merton made it clear that analysis also could be done on an organization, institution, or group. Returning to the issue of the functions of slavery for the South, it would be necessary to differentiate several levels of analysis and ask about the functions and dysfunctions of slavery for black families, white families, black political organizations, white political organizations, and so forth. In terms of net balance, slavery was probably more functional for certain social units and more dysfunctional for other social units. Addressing the issue at these more specific levels helps in analyzing the functionality of slavery for the South as a whole.

Manifest and latent functions

Merton also introduced the concepts of *manifest* and *latent* functions. These two terms have also been important additions to functional analysis. In simple terms, *manifest functions* are those that are intended, whereas *latent functions* are unintended. The manifest function of slavery, for example, was to increase the economic productivity of the South, but it had the latent function of providing a vast underclass that served to increase the social status of southern whites, both rich and poor. This idea is related to another of Merton's concepts—*unanticipated consequences*. Actions have both intended and unintended consequences. Although everyone is aware of the intended consequences, sociological analysis is required to uncover the unintended consequences; indeed, to some this is the very essence of sociology. Peter Berger (1963) has called this “debunking,” or looking beyond stated intentions to real effects.



A sociologist is well-equipped to find latent functions

Merton made it clear that unanticipated consequences and latent functions are not the same. A latent function is one type of unanticipated consequence, one that is functional for the designated system. But there are two other types of unanticipated consequences: “those that are dysfunctional for a designated system, and these comprise the latent dysfunctions,” and “those which are irrelevant to the system which they affect neither functionally or dysfunctionally . . . non-functional consequences”.

As further clarification of functional theory, Merton pointed out that a structure may be dysfunctional for the system as a whole yet may continue to exist. One might make a good case that discrimination against blacks, females, and other minority groups is dysfunctional for American society, yet it continues to exist because it is functional for a part of the social system; for example, discrimination against females is generally functional for males. However, these forms of discrimination are not without some dysfunctions, even for the group for which they are functional. Males do suffer from their discrimination against females; similarly, whites are hurt by their discriminatory behavior toward blacks. One could argue that these forms of discrimination adversely affect those who discriminate by keeping vast numbers of people underproductive and by increasing the likelihood of social conflict.

Merton contended that not all structures are indispensable to the workings of the social system. Some parts of our social system *can* be eliminated. This helps functional theory overcome another of its conservative biases. By recognizing that some structures are

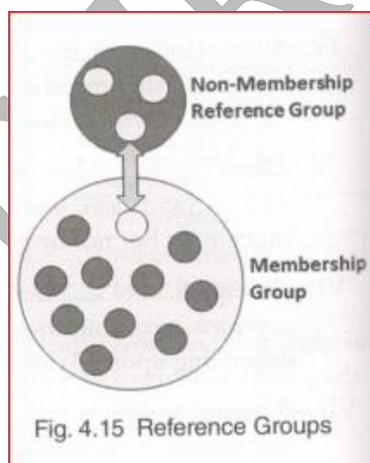
expendable, functionalism opens the way for meaningful social change. Our society, for example, could continue to exist (and even be improved) by the elimination of discrimination against various minority groups.

Merton's clarifications are of great utility to sociologists (for example, Gans) who wish to perform structural-functional analyses.

Reference Group

Reference group as a concept first appeared in Archives of Psychology of Herbert Hyman, but it was Merton who added a functional dimension in his Contribution to the Theory of Reference Group Behaviour, 1950. This theory was primarily inspired from the Samuel Stouffer's The American Soldier, 1949 which highlights the feeling of relative deprivation of a soldier despite no apparent deprivation in terms of actual hardship.

Reference Group is defined as a group, with which, one always makes a comparison, in order to evaluate one's achievement, aspirations, role performance and ambition. They act as normative standards for the individual. Merton later distinguished between Reference Group and Interaction Group. Interaction groups are a more general part of the individual's social environment but may neither set normative standards for individual nor serve as a standard of comparison. On the other hand, reference group is the aspirational group and is defined in normative terms as a standard of comparison. It implies that relative deprivation is also akin to reference group behaviour.



Reference groups can be of two types -

- I. Membership Groups
- II. Non-Membership Groups (See fig. 4.15)

Further, according to Merton, reference groups can be of two more types positive and negative reference groups. Positive reference groups are the ones that individual wishes to join; negative are those which individual wishes to avoid.

He also gives the concept of anticipatory socialisation in which individual starts to behave in a manner in which members of aspirational reference group behave. It leads to change in the value system of individual and it facilitates easy merger of individual in the aspirational group.

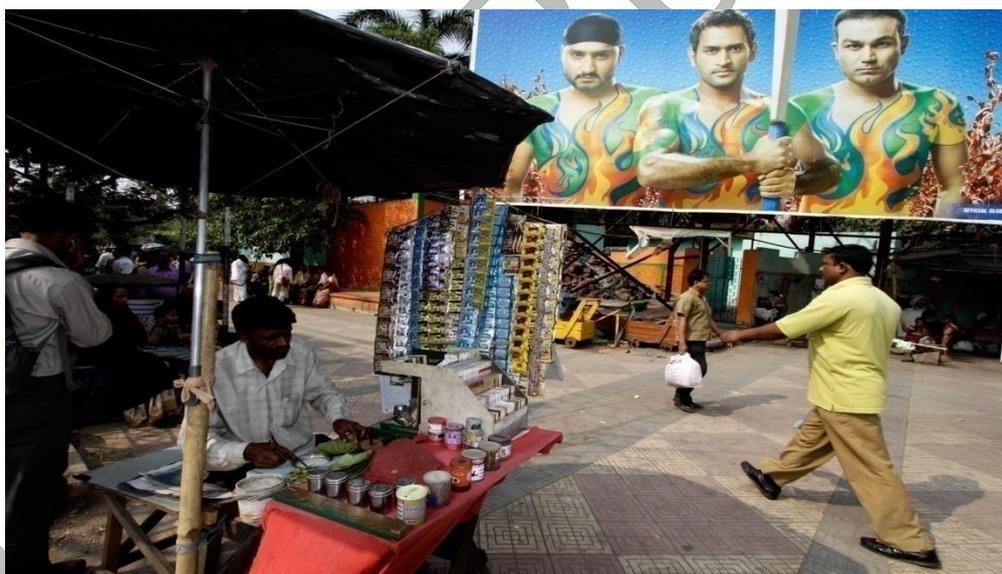
He also sees some dysfunctional aspects of anticipatory socialisation in case of closed systems. In such a situation, an individual becomes a pariah in his own social group and also fails to gain entry into reference group and is reduced to a marginal man.

It is totally up to an individual to decide what reference group one will make. So, a membership group may not be a reference group, but a non-membership group can be.

Merton also suggested some factors which are decisive in making a group, a reference group -

- I. Power and prestige
- II. Isolation in membership group
- III. Open vs closed group
- IV. Reference individuals or role models in a group

Further, reference groups don't remain the same always. The choice of reference groups depends on the nature and quality of norms and values one is interested in and as interests change, reference groups also change. One's reference group in political field may not be same as those in the religious field. As the choice of reference group is entirely upon an individual, often, there is a considerable difference in the type of groups chosen by different generations. This, to some extent, explains the phenomenon of Generation Gap.



Cricketers are an influential reference group for many Indians. Advertising plays up such aspirations.

Merton's theories and concepts are considered relevant, especially while developing a concept of holistic explanation in terms of both intended and unintended consequences. Social problems can be approached in a more pragmatic way, undertaking its manifest and latent analysis. By using Merton's functional paradigm, a number of middle range theories were formulated, which have strengthened the understanding of the society. For example, his theory of deviance has led to the development of a number of sub-cultural theories of deviance. The study of limited phenomenon is followed till now. He also made a contribution to make Sociology more inter-disciplinary. He gave some other concepts like Self-fulfilling Prophecy which have become a part of common vocabulary, along with his other concepts like Reference Group.

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

A self-fulfilling prophecy is a prediction that becomes true, due to the very fact that it is a prophecy and because of a purported positive feedback mechanism between behaviour of the actor and belief of the prophecy maker. For example, if a teacher in a class openly says that a student X will top, there are chances that student may actually top the class. A corollary of this is that subjects often perform according to the social expectations attached to them. This concept is also applicable in sociology of work.

Conformity and Deviance**Social structure and anomie**

Merton argued that deviance resulted from the culture and structure of society itself. He began from the standard functionalist position of value consensus that is, all members of society share the same values. However, since members of society are placed in different positions in the social structure (for example, they differ in terms of class position), they do not have the same opportunity of realising the shared values. This situation can generate deviance. In Merton's words, 'the social and cultural structure generates pressure for socially deviant behaviour upon people variously located in that structure'.



Drug Addiction is a form of deviance

Cultural goals and institutionalized means

Using the USA as an example, Merton outlined his theory as follows. Members of American society share the major values of American culture. In particular they share the goal of success, for which they all strive and which is largely measured in terms of wealth and material possessions. The 'American Dream' states that all members of society have an equal opportunity of achieving success, of owning a Cadillac, a Beverly Hills mansion and a substantial bank balance. In all societies there are

institutionalised means of reaching culturally defined goals. In America the accepted ways of achieving success are through educational qualifications, talent, hard work, drive, determination and ambition.

In a balanced society an equal emphasis is placed upon both cultural goals and institutionalised means, and members are satisfied with both. But in America great importance is attached to success, and relatively little importance is given to the accepted ways of achieving success. As such, American society is unstable and unbalanced. There is a tendency to reject the rules of the game' and to strive for success by any available means. The situation becomes like a game of cards in which winning becomes so important that the rules are abandoned by some of the players.

When rules cease to operate, a situation of normlessness or anomie results. In this situation of 'anything goes', norms no longer direct behaviour, and deviance is encouraged. In Merton's theory anomie involves an overemphasis on the cultural goals of success and lack of emphasis on culturally accepted means of achieving success (adhering to the norms and laws of society). It leads to a breakdown in norms. Merton used the gangster Al Capone as an example: he became rich through organised crime.

Individuals will respond to a situation of anomie in different ways. In particular, their reaction will be shaped by their position in the social structure.

Responses to cultural goals

Merton outlined five possible ways in which members of American society could respond to success goals:

1. The first and most common response is conformity. Members of society conform both to success goals and to the normative means of reaching them. They strive for success by means of accepted channels.
2. A second response is innovation. This response rejects normative means of achieving success and turns to deviant means, in particular, crime. Merton argues that members of the lower social strata are most likely to select this route to success. They are least likely to succeed via conventional channels, and so there is greater pressure upon them to deviate. Their educational qualifications are usually low and their jobs provide little opportunity for advancement. In Merton's words, they have little access to conventional and legitimate means for becoming successful'. Since their way is blocked, they innovate, turning to crime, which promises greater rewards than legitimate means.

Merton stressed that membership of the lower strata is not, in itself, sufficient to produce deviance. Only in societies such as the USA, where all members share the same success goals, does the pressure to innovate operate forcefully on the lower classes. Merton argues that those who innovate have been imperfectly socialized so that they abandon institutional means while retaining success-aspirations.

3. The third possible response is ritualism. Those who select this alternative are deviant because they have largely abandoned the commonly held success goals. The pressure to adopt this alternative is greatest for members of the lower middle class whose occupations provide less opportunity for success than those of other members of the middle class. However, compared with members of the working class, they have been strongly socialised to conform to social norms. This prevents them

from turning to crime. Unable to innovate, and with jobs that offer little opportunity for advancement, their only solution is to scale down or abandon their success goals.

Merton paints the following picture of typical lower middle-class ritualists. They are low-grade bureaucrats, ultra-respectable but stuck in a rut. They are sticklers for the rules, cling to red tape, conform to the outward standards of middle-class respectability, but have given up striving for success. Ritualists are deviant because they have rejected the success goals held by most members of society.

	Means	Goals	Example
Conformist	+	+	School Students
Innovator	-	+	Criminals
Ritualist	+	-	Low level bureaucrats
Retreatist	-	-	Drug Addicts
Rebellion	- +	- +	Revolutionaries

4. Merton terms the fourth, and least common, response, retreatism. It applies to psychotics, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug addicts. They have strongly internalised both the cultural goals and the institutionalised means, yet are unable to achieve success. They resolve this conflict by abandoning both the goals and the means of reaching them. They 'drop out' of society, defeated and resigned to their failure. They are deviant in two ways: they have rejected both the cultural goals and the institutionalised means. Merton does not relate retreatism to social class position.

5. Rebellion forms the fifth and final response. It is a rejection of both the success goals and the institutionalised means, and it replaces them with different goals and means. Those who adopt this alternative wish to create a new society. Merton argues that 'it is typically members of a rising class rather than the most depressed strata who organize the resentful and rebellious into a revolutionary group'.

To summarise, Merton claimed his analysis showed how the culture and structure of society generate deviance. The overemphasis upon the cultural goals of financial success and high status in American society, at the expense of institutionalised means, creates a tendency towards anomie. This tendency exerts pressure for deviance, a pressure which varies depending on a person's position in the class structure.

Evaluation of Merton's Theory of Deviance

Critics have attacked Merton's work for neglecting the power relationships in society as a whole, within which deviance and conformity occur. Laurie Taylor (1971) criticised Merton for not carrying his analysis far enough: for failing to consider who makes the laws and who benefits from them. In

Taylor's analogy, the whole game may have been rigged by the powerful with rules that guarantee their success: the laws of society.

Merton has also been criticised for assuming that there is a value consensus in American society and that people only deviate as a result of structural strain. His theory fails to explain why some people who experience the effects of anomie do not become criminals or deviants.

Some critics believe that Merton's theory over-predicts and exaggerates working-class crime, and under-predicts and underestimates middle-class or white-collar crime.

Taylor, Walton and Young (1973) believe that Merton's theory cannot account for politically motivated criminals (such as freedom fighters) who break the law because of commitment to their cause rather than the effects of anomie.

Some sociologists defend Merton's theory. Robert Reiner (1984) points out that Merton acknowledged that not all Americans accept the success goals of the American Dream, though such goals are sufficiently widespread in the lower strata to account for their deviance.

Reiner also notes that 'Merton was well aware both of the extensiveness of white-collar crime in the suites, and of the way that official statistics disproportionately record crimes in the streets'. Merton explained white-collar crime by suggesting that American society placed no upper limit on success.

However wealthy people were, they might still want more. Nevertheless, Reiner supports Merton's view that there was more working-class crime, since those failing to become wealthy in legal ways will be under more pressure to find alternative routes to success. Reiner also believes that Merton's theory can be developed to accommodate most of the criticisms. Thus Taylor et al.'s political criminals could be included in Merton's rebellion adaptation.

Subculture theorists have also criticised Merton. However, as Reiner points out, their work represents an attempt to refine and develop Merton's theory rather than rejecting it altogether.

According to Interactionists like Howard Becker in his article Labelling Theory Reconsidered, 1974, deviance is not the intrinsic quality of behaviour itself. One is labelled as a deviant and one is not deviant. Same person may not be labelled as deviant by one group, but can be by another group.

Lemert in his Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control, 1972 as well as Laurie Taylor in his Deviance and Society, 1971 argue that those who wield power also decide who will be deviant. Definitions of deviance don't reflect consensus of society, but views of the powerful.

Merton refers to only goals and means, there may be other aspects of social structure which may cause anomie.

Albert Cohen in his Deviance and Control, 1966 argues that deviance is due to a specific subculture that members of particular subgroups develop. Hence, it is collective in nature and not at an individual level as Merton has tried to prove.

Albert Cohen further argues that Merton has failed to take into account non-utilitarian crimes such as vandalism, which don't produce any rewards that can be explained by the idea of a subculture, but not by goals-means dichotomy, as proposed by Merton.

Chicago School also develops a distinctive explanation of deviance in the form of an ecological approach according to which, in a given city or town, deviance levels vary from area to area depending upon relative economic prosperity and other factors.

A person at different times may respond to the same type of social impetus differently. It shows that anomic behaviour depends on the individual as well.

Hannon and Defronzo provide some empirical support for Merton. In a study of 406 metropolitan counties in the USA they found that those with higher levels of welfare provision had lower levels of crime. They argued that the welfare provision opened up opportunities for people to achieve the goal of material success through legitimate means and therefore reduced anomie and the crime which could result from it.

Despite the criticisms, Merton's theory remains one of the more plausible attempts to explain crime rates in whole societies. Joachim J. Savelsberg (1995) argues that Merton's strain theory can help to explain the rapid rises in the crime rate in post-communist Poland, former Czechoslovakia, eastern Germany and Russia. Poland is an example of how dramatic these rises sometimes were. Poland had its first free elections in 1989. Between 1989 and 1990 the official crime rate in Poland increased by no less than 69 per cent.

Merton's work, however, can hardly explain all crime. Since his original work, other sociologists have modified and built on his theory in order to try to develop more complete explanations for crime and delinquency.

Merton and Durkheim on Anomie and Deviance	
Durkheim	Merton
Durkheim sees anomie as a result of pathological consequences of certain social facts.	Anomie is a structural phenomenon.
Anomie is a temporary stage, occurring when there is a transition from one set of values to another and there is lack of value consensus during this transition.	According to Merton, anomie is ever present in society as some degree of structural strain is always there.
Durkheim sees anomie as synonymous to normlessness and since it is a pathological state, it has negative consequences.	Anomie is not normlessness per se, but a result of frustration from inability to achieve culturally defined goals. It may also lead to positive effects like innovation and revolution.

GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

Self and Identity

Mead was one of the most important scholars that were associated with the Chicago School. He gave a unique explanation of the human interactions in society and rejected a behaviouristic view of human beings, the view that people blindly and unconsciously respond to, as an external stimuli. He believed that people had consciousness, a self, and that it was the responsibility of the sociologist to study this aspect of social reality. He was highly influenced by psychological behaviourism and included many of its principles in his works. Mead offered Sociology, a social-psychological theory that stood in stark contrast to the prevailing theories offered by most of the major European theorists. His works were also central towards evolution of symbolic Interactionism.

The two most significant intellectual roots of Mead's work in particular, and of symbolic Interactionism in general, are the philosophy of pragmatism and psychological behaviourism. His ideas are contained in *Mind, Self and Society*, 1934, a work compiled from the notes of his students, in particular of Herbert Blumer. His major theoretical work in the field of symbolic Interactionism is his idea of Self. Self, according to Herbert Blumer, is the foundation of symbolic Interaction.

In Mead's view, traditional social psychology began with the psychology of the individual, in an effort to explain social experience. In contrast, Mead always gave priority to the social world in controlling man's destiny.

Self

Much of Mead's thinking in general, and especially on the mind, involves his ideas on the critically important concept of the self, basically the ability to take oneself as an object; the self is the peculiar ability to be both subject and object. As is true of all Mead's major concepts, the self presupposes a social process: communication among humans. Lower animals do not have selves, nor do human infants at birth. The self arises with development and through social activity and social relationships. To Mead, it is impossible to imagine a self arising in the absence of social experiences. However, once a self has developed, it is possible for it to continue to exist without social contact. Thus, Robinson Crusoe developed a self while he was in civilization, and he continued to have it when he was living alone on what he thought for a while was a deserted island. In other words, he continued to have the ability to take himself as an object. Once a self is developed, people usually, but not always, manifest it. For example, the self is not involved in habitual actions or in immediate physiological experiences of pleasure or pain.

The self is dialectically related to the mind. That is, on the one hand, Mead argues that the body is not a self and becomes a self only when a mind has developed. On the other hand, the self, along with its reflexiveness, is essential to the development of the mind. Of course, it is impossible to separate mind and self, because the self is a mental process. However, even though we may think of it as a mental process, the self is a social process. In his discussion of the self, as we have seen in regard to all other mental phenomena, Mead resists the idea of lodging it in consciousness and instead embeds it in social experience and social processes. In this way, Mead seeks to give a behavioristic sense of the self: "But it is where one does respond to that which he addresses to another and where that response of his own becomes a part of his conduct, where he not only hears himself but responds to himself, talks and replies to himself as truly as the other person replies to him, that we have behavior in which

the individuals become objects to themselves". The self, then, is simply another aspect of the overall social process of which the individual is a part.



The important role of Society in shaping the Self is everyday experienced by the current social media-obsessed generation

The general mechanism for the development of the self is reflexivity, or the ability to put ourselves unconsciously into others' places and to act as they act. As a result, people are able to examine themselves as others would examine them. As Mead says:

It is by means of reflexiveness—the turning-back of the experience of the individual upon himself—that the whole social process is thus brought into the experience of the individuals involved in it; it is by such means, which enable the individual to take the attitude of the other toward himself, that the individual is able consciously to adjust himself to that process, and to modify the resultant process in any given social act in terms of his adjustment to it.

The self also allows people to take part in their conversations with others. That is, one is aware of what one is saying and as a result is able to monitor what is being said and to determine what is going to be said next.

In order to have selves, individuals must be able to get “outside themselves” so that they can evaluate themselves, so that they can become objects to themselves. To do this, people basically put themselves in the same experiential field as they put everyone else. Everyone is an important part of that experiential situation, and people must take themselves into account if they are to be able to act rationally in a given situation. Having done this, they seek to examine themselves impersonally, objectively, and without emotion.

However, people cannot experience themselves directly. They can do so only indirectly by putting themselves in the position of others and viewing themselves from that standpoint. The standpoint from which one views one’s self can be that of a particular individual or that of the social group as a whole. As Mead puts it, most generally, “It is only by taking the roles of others that we have been able to come back to ourselves”.

Child Development

Mead is very interested in the genesis of the self. He sees the conversation of gestures as the background for the self, but it does not involve a self because in such a conversation the people are not taking themselves as objects. Mead traces the genesis of the self through two stages in childhood development.

Play Stage The first stage is the play stage; it is during this stage that children learn to take the attitude of particular others to themselves. Although lower animals also play, only human beings “play at being someone else”.

Mead gives the example of a child playing (American) “Indian”: “This means that the child has a certain set of stimuli which call out in itself the responses they would call out in others, and which answer to an Indian”. As a result of such play, the child learns to become both subject and object and begins to become able to build a self. However, it is a limited self because the child can take only the roles of distinct and separate others. Children may play at being “mommy” and “daddy” and in the process develop the ability to evaluate themselves as their parents, and other specific individuals, do. However, they lack a more general and organized sense of themselves.

Game Stage It is the next stage, the game stage, that is required if a person is to develop a self in the full sense of the term (Vail, 2007c). Whereas in the play stage the child takes the role of discrete others, in the game stage the child must take the role of everyone else involved in the game. Furthermore, these different roles must have a definite relationship to one another. In illustrating the game stage, Mead gives his famous example of a baseball (or, as he calls it, “ball nine”) game:

But in a game where a number of individuals are involved, then the child taking one role must be ready to take the role of everyone else. If he gets in a ball nine

he must have the responses of each position involved in his own position. He must know what everyone else is going to do in order to carry out his own play. He has to take all of these roles. They do not all have to be present in consciousness at the same time, but at some moments he has to have three or four individuals present in his own attitude, such as the one who is going to throw the ball, the one who is going to catch it, and so on. These responses must be, in some degree, present in his own make-up. In the game, then, there is a set of responses of such others so organized that the attitude of one calls out the appropriate attitudes of the other.

In the play stage, children are not organized wholes because they play at a series of discrete roles. As a result, in Mead’s view they lack definite personalities. However, **in the game stage**, such organization begins and a definite personality starts to emerge. Children begin to become able to

function in organized groups and, most important, to determine what they will do within a specific group.



Children attain Selfhood during the Game stage

Generalized Other

The game stage yields one of Mead's best-known concepts, the generalized other. The generalized other is the attitude of the entire community or, in the example of the baseball game, the attitude of the entire team. The ability to take the role of the generalized other is essential to the self: "Only in so far as he takes the attitudes of the organized social group to which he belongs toward the organized, co-operative social activity or set of such activities in which that group is engaged, does he develop a complete self". It is also crucial that people be able to evaluate themselves from the point of view of the generalized other and not merely from the viewpoint of discrete others. Taking the role of the generalized other, rather than that of discrete others, allows for the possibility of abstract thinking and objectivity. Here is the way Mead describes the full development of the self:

So the self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into the organized social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior in which it and others are involved—a pattern which enters as a whole into the individual's experience in terms of these organized group attitudes which, through the mechanism of the central nervous system, he takes toward himself, just as he takes the individual attitudes of others.

In other words, to have a self, one must be a member of a community and be directed by the attitudes common to the community. While play requires only pieces of selves, the game requires a coherent self.

Not only is taking the role of the generalized other essential to the self, it also is crucial for the development of organized group activities. A group requires that individuals direct their activities in accord with the attitudes of the generalized other. The generalized other also represents Mead's familiar propensity to give priority to the social, because it is through the generalized other that the group influences the behavior of individuals.

Mead also looks at the self from a pragmatic point of view. At the individual level, the self allows the individual to be a more efficient member of the larger society. Because of the self, people are more likely to do what is expected of them in a given situation. Because people often try to live up to group expectations, they are more likely to avoid the inefficiencies that come from failing to do what the group expects. Furthermore, the self allows for greater coordination in society as a whole. Because individuals can be counted on to do what is expected of them, the group can operate more effectively.

The preceding, as well as the overall discussion of the self, might lead us to believe that Mead's actors are little more than conformists and that there is little individuality, since everyone is busy conforming to the expectations of the generalized other. But Mead is clear that each self is different from all the others. Selves share a common structure, but each self receives unique biographical articulation. In addition, it is clear that there is not simply one grand generalized other but that there are many generalized others in society, because there are many groups in society. People therefore have multiple generalized others and, as a result, multiple selves. Each person's unique set of selves makes him or her different from everyone else. Furthermore, people need not accept the community as it is; they can reform things and seek to make them better. We are able to change the community because of our capacity to think. But Mead is forced to put this issue of individual creativity in familiar, behavioristic terms: "The only way in which we can react against the disapproval of the entire community is by setting up a higher sort of community which in a certain sense out-votes the one we find . . . he may stand out by himself over against it. But to do that he has to comprehend the voices of the past and of the future. That is the only way the self can get a voice which is more than the voice of the community". In other words, to stand up to the generalized other, the individual must construct a still larger generalized other, composed not only from the present but also from the past and the future, and then respond to it.

Mead identifies two aspects, or phases, of the self, which he labels the "I" and the "me" (for a critique of this distinction, see Athens, 1995). As Mead puts it, "The self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases". It is important to bear in mind that the "I" and the "me" are processes within the larger process of the self; they are not "things."

"I" and "Me"

The "I" is the immediate response of an individual to others. It is the incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self. People do not know in advance what the action of the "I" will be: "But what that response will be he does not know and nobody else knows. Perhaps he will make a brilliant play or an error. The response to that situation as it appears in his immediate experience is uncertain". We are never totally aware of the "I," and through it we surprise ourselves with our actions. We know the "I" only after the act has been carried out. Thus, we know the "I" only in our memories. Mead lays great stress on the "I" for four reasons. First, it is a key source of novelty in the social process. Second, Mead believes that it is in the "I" that our most important values are located. Third, the "I" constitutes something that we all seek—the realization of the self. It is the "I" that permits us to develop a "definite personality." Finally, Mead sees an evolutionary process in history in which

people in primitive societies are dominated more by the “me” while in modern societies there is a greater component of the “I.”

The “I” gives Mead’s theoretical system some much-needed dynamism and creativity. Without it, Mead’s actors would be totally dominated by external and internal controls. With it, Mead is able to deal with the changes brought about not only by the great figures in history (for example, Einstein) but also by individuals on a day-to-day basis. It is the “I” that makes these changes possible. Since every personality is a mix of “I” and “me,” the great historical figures are seen as having a larger proportion of “I” than most others have. But in day-to-day situations, anyone’s “I” may assert itself and lead to change in the social situation. Uniqueness is also brought into Mead’s system through the biographical articulation of each individual’s “I” and “me.” That is, the specific exigencies of each person’s life give him or her a unique mix of “I” and “me.”

The “I” reacts against the “me,” which is the “organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes”. In other words, the “me” is the adoption of the generalized other. In contrast to the “I,” people are conscious of the “me”; the “me” involves conscious responsibility. As Mead says, “The ‘me’ is a conventional, habitual individual”. Conformists are dominated by the “me,” although everyone—whatever his or her degree of conformity—has, and must have, a substantial “me.” It is through the “me” that society dominates the individual. Indeed, Mead defines the idea of social control as the dominance of the expression of the “me” over the expression of the “I.” Later in *Mind, Self and Society*, Mead elaborates on his ideas on social control:

Social control, as operating in terms of self-criticism, exerts itself so intimately and extensively over individual behavior or conduct, serving to integrate the individual and his actions with reference to the organized social process of experience and behavior in which he is implicated. . . . Social control over individual behavior or conduct operates by virtue of the social origin and basis of such [self-] criticism. That is to say, self-criticism is essentially social criticism, and behavior controlled socially. Hence social control, so far from tending to crush out the human individual or to obliterate his self-conscious individuality, is, on the contrary, actually constitutive of and inextricably associated with that individuality.

Mead also looks at the “I” and the “me” in pragmatic terms. The “me” allows the individual to live comfortably in the social world, while the “I” makes change in society possible. Society gets enough conformity to allow it to function, and it gets a steady infusion of new developments to prevent it from stagnating. The “I” and the “me” are thus part of the whole social process and allow both individuals and society to function more effectively.

Society

At the most general level, Mead uses the term society to mean the ongoing social process that precedes both the mind and the self. Given its importance in shaping the mind and self, society is clearly of central importance to Mead. At another level, society to Mead represents the organized set of responses that are taken over by the individual in the form of the “me.” Thus, in this sense individuals carry society around with them, giving them the ability, through self-criticism, to control themselves. Mead also deals with the evolution of society. But Mead has relatively little to say explicitly about society, in spite of its centrality in his theoretical system. His most important contributions lie in his thoughts on mind and self. Even John C. Baldwin, who sees a much more

societal (macro) component in Mead's thinking, is forced to admit: "The macro components of Mead's theoretical system are not as well developed as the micro" social institutions. Mead broadly defines an institution as the "common response in the community" or "the life habits of the community". More specifically, he says that "the whole community acts toward the individual under certain circumstances in an identical way . . . there is an identical response on the part of the whole community under these conditions. We call that the formation of the institution". We carry this organized set of attitudes around with us, and they serve to control our actions, largely through the "me."

Education is the process by which the common habits of the community (the institution) are "internalized" in the actor. This is an essential process because, in Mead's view, people neither have selves nor are genuine members of the community until they can respond to themselves as the larger community does. To do this, people must have internalized the common attitudes of the community.

But again Mead is careful to point out that institutions need not destroy individuality or stifle creativity. Mead recognizes that there are "oppressive, stereotyped, and ultra-conservative social institutions—like the church—which by their more or less rigid and inflexible unprogressiveness crush or blot out individuality". However, he is quick to add: "There is no necessary or inevitable reason why social institutions should be oppressive or rigidly conservative, or why they should not rather be, as many are, flexible and progressive, fostering individuality rather than discouraging it". To Mead, institutions should define what people ought to do only in a very broad and general sense and should allow plenty of room for individuality and creativity. Mead here demonstrates a very modern conception of social institutions as both constraining individuals and enabling them to be creative individuals. Mead was distinct from the other classical theorists in emphasizing the enabling character of society—arguably disregarding society's constraining power.

What Mead lacks in his analysis of society in general, and institutions in particular, is a true macro sense of them in the way that theorists such as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim dealt with this level of analysis. This is true in spite of the fact that Mead does have a notion of emergence in the sense that the whole is seen as more than the sum of its parts. More specifically, "Emergence involves a reorganization, but the reorganization brings in something that was not there before. The first time oxygen and hydrogen come together, water appears. Now water is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, but water was not there before in the separate elements". However, Mead is much more prone to apply the idea of emergence to consciousness than to apply it to the larger society. That is, mind and self are seen as emergent from the social process. Moreover, Mead is inclined to use the term emergence merely to mean the coming into existence of something new or novel.

Symbols

In Mead's view, human thought, experience and conduct are essentially social. They owe their nature to the fact that human beings interact in terms of symbols. the most important of which are contained in language. A symbol does not simply stand for an object or event: it defines it in a particular way and indicates a response to it. Thus the symbol chair' not only represents a class of objects and defines them as similar, it also indicates a line of action: that is, the action of sitting.

Symbols impose particular meanings on objects and events, and in doing so largely exclude other possible meanings. For example, chairs may be made out of metal, cane or wood, and on this basis be defined as very different objects. However, such differences are rendered insignificant by the fact that

they are all categorised in terms of the symbol 'chair'. Similarly, chairs can be stood on, used as a source of fuel or used as a means of assaulting someone: but the range of possible activities that could be associated with chairs is largely excluded by the course of action indicated by the symbol 'chair'.

Symbols provide the means whereby humans can interact meaningfully with their natural and social environment. They are human-made and refer not to the intrinsic nature of objects and events but to the ways in which people perceive them.

Without symbols there would be no human interaction and no human society. Symbolic interaction is necessary since humans have no instincts to direct their behaviour. Humans are not genetically programmed to react automatically to particular stimuli. In order to survive they must therefore construct and live within a world of meaning. For example, they must classify the natural environment into categories of food and non-food in order to meet basic nutritional requirements. In this way humans define both the stimuli and their response to them. Thus, when hunters on the African savannah categorise antelope as a source of food they define what is significant in the natural environment and their response to it. Via symbols, meaning is imposed on the world of nature, and human interaction with that world is thereby made possible.

Role-taking

Social life can only proceed if members of society largely share the meanings of symbols. If this were not the case, meaningful communication would be impossible. However, common symbols provide only the means by which human interaction can be accomplished. In order for interaction to proceed, each person involved must interpret the meanings and intentions of others. This is made possible by the existence of common symbols, but actually accomplished by means of a process that Mead termed 'role-taking'.

The process of role taking involves one person taking on the role of another by imaginatively placing themselves in the position of the people with whom they are interacting. For example, if a person observes another smiling, crying, waving a hand or shaking a fist, they will put themselves in that person's position in order to interpret the intention and meaning. On the basis of this interpretation they will make their response to the action of the other.

Thus, if an individual observes someone shaking a fist, they may interpret this gesture as an indication of aggression, but their interpretation will not automatically lead to a particular response. They may ignore the gesture, respond in kind, attempt to defuse the situation with a joke, and so on. The person with whom they are interacting will then take their role, interpret their response and either continue or close the interaction on the basis of this interpretation. In this respect human interaction can be seen as a continuous process of interpretation, with each taking the role of the other.

Culture, social roles and institutions

Mead accepted that a society has a culture, and that this culture suggests appropriate types of behaviour for particular social roles. For example, a culture might specify that the role of doctor should not involve anything that might harm patients.

People will tend to act in ways that are consistent both with the expected behaviour in a particular role, and with that person's concept of self. From Mead's point of view, social institutions such as the family or the state have an existence in the sense that particular social roles are attached to them. Thus the institution 'the family' consists of the social roles of mother, father, daughter, son, sister, brother and so on.

Although the existence of a culture and social roles does shape human behaviour to some extent, humans still have considerable choice as to how they behave. Mead gave a number of reasons why this is so:

1. Many cultural expectations are not specific. Society may, for example, demand that people wear clothes, but there is usually considerable freedom as to which clothes to wear.
2. Individuals have considerable choice as to which roles they enter: for example, they have an element of choice in what job they do.
3. Some social roles encourage a diversity of behaviour: for example, fashion designers are encouraged to develop novel designs.
4. Society does not have an all-embracing culture. Subcultures exist and people can choose which of them to join.
5. Many cultural meanings indicate possibilities rather than requirements. Thus the symbol chair suggests the possibility that people can sit on the object, but they are not compelled to do so.
6. At times it may be impossible to act in accordance with a social role: for example, parents may find themselves unable to care adequately for their children. In such circumstances new and innovative behaviour is necessary.

Social roles are not therefore fixed or unchanging; in reality they are constantly being modified in the course of interaction.

The individual and society

Mead's view of human interaction sees humans as both actively creating the social environment and being shaped by it. Individuals initiate and direct their own action, while at the same time being influenced by the attitudes and expectations of others in the form of the generalised other. The individual and society are regarded as inseparable, for the individual can only become a human being in a social context. In this context individuals develop a sense of self, which is a prerequisite for thought. They learn to take the roles of others, which is essential both for the development of self and for cooperative action. Without communication in terms of symbols whose meanings are shared, these processes would not be possible. Humanity therefore lives in a world of symbols that give meaning and significance to life and provide the basis for human interaction.

The basic premises of symbolic interactionism

Blumer, a student of George Herbert Mead, systematically developed the ideas of his mentor. In Blumer's view, symbolic interactionism rests on three basic premises:

1. Human beings act on the basis of meanings that they give to objects and events, rather than simply reacting either to external stimuli such as social forces, or to internal stimuli such as organic drives. Symbolic interactionism therefore rejects both societal and biological determinism.
2. Meanings arise from the process of interaction, rather than simply being present at the outset and shaping future action. To some degree, meanings are created, modified, developed and changed within interaction situations rather than being fixed and pre-formed. In the process of interaction actors do not slavishly follow preset norms or mechanically act out established roles.
3. Meanings are the result of interpretive procedures employed by actors within interaction contexts. By taking the role of the other, actors interpret the meanings and intentions of others. By means of the mechanism of self-interaction, individuals modify or change their definition of the situation, rehearse alternative courses of action and consider their possible consequences. Thus the meanings that guide action arise in the context of interaction via a series of complex interpretive procedures.

A Critique of Symbolic interactionism

Interaction in a vacuum

Interactionists have often been accused of examining human interaction in a vacuum. They have tended to focus on small-scale face-to-face interaction, with little concern for its historical or social setting. They have concentrated on particular situations and encounters, with little reference to the historical events leading up to them or the wider social framework in which they occur. Since these factors influence the particular interaction situation, the scant attention they have received has been regarded as a serious omission. Thus, in a criticism of Mead, Ropers argued: The activities that he sees men engaged in are not historically determined relationships of social and historical continuity: they are merely episodes, interactions, encounters, and situations.

Patrick Baert and Filipe da Silva (2010) make the additional point that Mead saw social life as too consensual. While traditional societies might have considerable consensus in terms of shared meanings, society today is characterized by the mutual coexistence of distinct cultural forms. There is certainly not just one set of implicit rules at procedures.

The origin of norms

While symbolic interactionism provides a corrective to the excesses of societal determinism, many critics have argued it has gone too far in this direction.

Although they claim that action is not determined by structural norms, interactionists do admit the presence of such norms. However, they tend to take them as given rather than explaining their origin. As William Skidmore (1975) commented, interactionists largely fail to explain why people consistently choose to act in given ways in certain situations, instead of in all the other ways they might possibly have acted.

In stressing the flexibility and freedom of human action, interactionists tend to downplay the constraints on action. In Skidmore's view, this is due to the fact that interactionism fails to give an

account of social structure. In other words, it fails to explain adequately how standardized normative behaviour comes about and why members of society are motivated to act in terms of social norms.

The source of meanings

Similar criticisms have been made with reference to what many see as the failure of interactionists to explain the source of the meanings to which they attach such importance. As the chapters on education and on crime and deviance have shown, interactionism provides little indication of the origins of the meanings in terms of which individuals are labelled by teachers, police and probation officers.

Critics argue that such meanings are not spontaneously created in interaction situations. Instead, they are systematically generated by the social structure. Thus Marxists have argued that the meanings that operate in face-to-face interactions are largely the product of class relationships. From this viewpoint, interactionists have failed to explain the most significant thing about meanings: their origin.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations discussed above, symbolic interactionism has made an important contribution to sociology. It has shown the usefulness of micro sociology in understanding everyday life, particularly the dynamics of small groups. The labelling theory of Howard Becker transformed the study of crime and deviance. The sort of qualitative methodology advocated by Blumer has been widely adopted by supporters of unstructured interviewing and participant observation.

Baert and da Silva (2010) argue that symbolic interactionism was important in the 1960s in challenging structural perspectives such as functionalism. Along with ethnomethodology, it contributed to later attempts to produce a theory combining structural and interpretive/social action perspectives. Baert and da Silva say: 'Some of the concepts and methods introduced by these new approaches have gradually filtered through. This gradual acceptance is demonstrated by their usage in the 1980s to develop a grand theory of society.' An example is Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration.