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DEPT. OF SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 1.1 Fundamental of Sociology

Block 1: The Fundamental of Sociological Perspective

Meaning of the Sociology ,
Definition,
Scope and
Importance

Learning Objectives

■ **Defining the Sociology Perspective**

- **Meaning of the Sociology**
- **Sociology and Common Sense**
- **Sociology and Science**
- **Definition of Sociology**
- **Scope of the Sociology**

■ **Sociology and the Social Sciences**

■ **The Development of Sociology**

■ **Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology**

Introduction to Sociology

Origin, meaning ,definition and nature of sociology

Sociology is the scientific study of human life, social groups, whole societies and the human world as such. It is dazzling and compelling enterprise, as its subject matter is our own behaviour as social beings.

Introduction to Sociology

- **“Sociology is the scientific study of human society and social interactions.”**
- **What makes sociology “scientific?”**
- Concerts, sports games, and political rallies can have very large crowds. When you attend one of these events, you may know only the people you came with. Yet you may experience a feeling of connection to the group. You are one of the crowd. different groups exist and different behaviors are on display . You move out of the way when someone needs to get by, and you say "excuse me" when you need to leave. You know how to behave in this kind of crowd.
- In order to carry out their studies,
- sociologists identify cultural patterns and social forces and determine how they affect individuals and
- groups. They also develop ways to apply their findings to the real world.

Sociology and Common Sense

- **Common sense assumptions are usually based on very limited observation.**
- **Moreover, the premises on which common sense assumptions are seldom examined.**
- **Sociology seeks to:**
 - use a broad range of carefully selected observations; and
 - theoretically understand and explain those observations.
- **While sociological research might confirm common sense observation, its broader base and theoretical rational provide a stronger basis for conclusions.**

What Is Sociology?

- A dictionary defines **sociology** as the systematic study of society and social interaction. The word
- “sociology” is derived from the Latin word *socius* (companion) and the Greek word *logos* (study of),
- meaning “the study of companionship.” While this is a starting point for the discipline, sociology is
- actually much more complex. It uses many different methods to study a wide range of subject matter
- and to apply these studies to the real world.

The History of Sociology



People have been thinking like sociologists long before sociology became a separate academic discipline: Plato and Aristotle, Confucius, Khaldun, and Voltaire all set the stage for modern sociology. (Photos (a),(b),(d) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Photo (c) courtesy of Moumou82/Wikimedia Commons)

The History of Sociology

- Since ancient times, people have been fascinated by the relationship between individuals and the societies to which they belong. Many of the topics that are central to modern sociological scholarship were studied by ancient philosophers. Many of these earlier thinkers were motivated by their desire to describe an ideal society. In the 13th century, Ma Tuan-Lin, a Chinese historian, first recognized social dynamics as an underlying component of historical development in his seminal encyclopedia, *General Study of Literary Remains*. The next century saw the emergence of the historian some consider to be the world's first sociologist:
- Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) of Tunisia. He wrote about many topics of interest today, setting a foundation for both modern sociology and economics, including a theory of social conflict, a comparison of nomadic and sedentary life, a description of political economy, and a study connecting a tribe's social cohesion to its capacity for power (Hannoum 2003). In the 18th century, Age of Enlightenment philosophers developed general principles that could be used to explain social life. Thinkers such as John Locke, Voltaire, Immanuel Kant, and Thomas Hobbes responded to what they saw as social ills by writing on topics that they hoped would lead to social reform.

The History of Sociology

- The early 19th century saw great changes with the Industrial Revolution, increased mobility, and new kinds of employment. It was also a time of great social and political upheaval with the rise of empires that exposed many people—for the first time—to societies and cultures other than their own. Millions of people were moving into cities and many people were turning away from their traditional religious beliefs.
- Sociology was developed as a way to study and try to understand the changes to society brought on by the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some of the earliest sociologists thought that societies and individuals' roles in society could be studied using the same scientific methodologies that were used in the natural sciences, while others believed that it was impossible to predict human behavior scientifically, and still others debated the value of such predictions. Those perspectives continue to be represented within sociology today.

ORIGIN

Studying **society can hardly be claimed to be anything new**; as far back as we have records, scholars and scribes have described and analyzed the **social life shared by a people**. Yet sociology as a discipline goes back in name and identity only to the early decades of the **nineteenth century**. Sociology grew at a time of new and creative social thought that transformed and modernized all of the social sciences. New specialized disciplines broke away from the long-established fields of history and philosophy.

The French Revolution, which began in 1789, symbolized this dramatic break with political and social tradition. French social analyst Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1895) declared that the changes in society brought about by the French revolution amounted to 'nothing short of the regeneration of the whole human race'. Huge factories, exploding cities, and a new spirit of individualism- these changes combined to make people aware of their surroundings. As the social ground trembled under people's feet, the new discipline of sociology was born in England.

ORIGIN

- France and Germany-precisely where the changes were greatest. The **discipline of sociology emerged in response to the vast social upheaval** which so radically changed the shape of society in Europe; the French Revolution, for one which marked the rise to political power of new middle classes, instead of aristocrats and kings, the Industrial Revolution, for another, which, together with capitalism, brought about industrial society. The origins of these changes, just after the French Revolution, that thoughtful people began to realize just how revolutionary they were.
- Once under way the revolutionary transformation of society relentlessly altered the way everyone was to live. Two significant consequences followed from this. 1) People's daily range of personal experience became too limited in scope to provide them with sufficient familiarity with their own social world, for that world was growing to be vast and complex.
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 - 2) Their world changed before their eyes even as they learned about it. People soon learned that they could not assume that their world would be the same as the world of their parents, or that the world of their children would be like their own.



For many social thinkers the radical transformation of society produced both hope and anxiety. Political democracy and rising standards of living were sources of hope. Yet there also emerged a deep anxiety over the future. Scholars recognized that an old order was gone, replaced by a new order of unfamiliar and uncertain features .

- Among a varied group of intellectuals in nineteenth century Europe, there developed a new consciousness about society, a recognition of how revolutionary has been the change in human society, how uncertain had the future become .From such concerns as those, Sociology was born. Sociology has attempted to provide answers to questions generated about the old and new forms of society.
- The origin of Sociology, then, is rooted equally in two different though related tasks. The formulation of a theory of industrial society, and observation and description of the lives of people in new, urbanized environments. If sociology emerged as a distinct social science from the School of Distance Education this process, many others besides sociologists engaged in the task. Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who is known as the father of sociology, recognized the absence of a general science that deals with society as a whole.

Meaning of the Sociology

- Comte combined two terms 'Socius', Latin for society , and 'logos' , Greek for studying and coined ' sociology ' which literally means "study of society"
- Comte defined sociology as the abstract and theoretical science of social phenomena "subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation'. Comte was startled by the destructive effect of the French revolution which, he believed, undermined the moral fabric of the community. He wanted to establish a new social order based on what he perceived to be the moral community. The task of recreating a new social order required a new scientific discipline with objective laws. Thus was born sociology as a science of society.
- Today sociologists are more apt to define sociology as the scientific study of society, its institutions, structures and processes. Typically, sociology is concerned with social interaction, social groups and social behaviour.
- Sociology is the study of individual in a social setting that includes group's organization, cultures and societies; and of the interrelation of individuals, groups, organizations, cultures and societies. Sociology is the study of individuals in a social setting. The social setting in which people live have been created by individuals throughout the course of history.

The Development of Sociology

- **Sociology emerged as a separate discipline in the nineteenth century**
- **This was a time of great social upheaval due largely to the French and Industrial Revolutions**
- **Several early sociologists shaped the direction of the discipline**

Auguste Comte (1798-1857)



- Responsible for coining the term “sociology”
- Set out to develop the “science of man” that would be based on empirical observation
- Focused on two aspects of society:
 - *Social Statics*—forces which produce order and stability
 - *Social Dynamics*—forces which contribute to social change

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)



Authored one of the earliest analyses of culture and life in the United States entitled *Theory and Practice of Society in America*
Translated Comte's *Positive Philosophy* into English

Harriet Martineau

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)



Herbert Spencer

- Authored the first sociology text, *Principles of Sociology*
- Most well known for proposing a doctrine called “Social Darwinism”
 - Suggested that people who could not compete were poorly adapted to the environment and inferior
 - This is an idea commonly called *survival of the fittest*

Karl Marx (1818-1883)



- Marx is the father of *conflict theory*
- Saw human history in a continual state of conflict between two major classes:
 - *Bourgeoisie*—owners of the means of production (capitalists)
 - *Proletariat*—the workers
- Predicted that revolution would occur producing first a socialist state, followed by a communist society

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)



Emile Durkheim

- Durkheim moved sociology fully into the realm of an empirical science
- Most well known empirical study is called *Suicide*, where he looks at the social causes of suicide
- Generally regarded as the founder of *functionalist theory*

Max Weber (1864-1920)

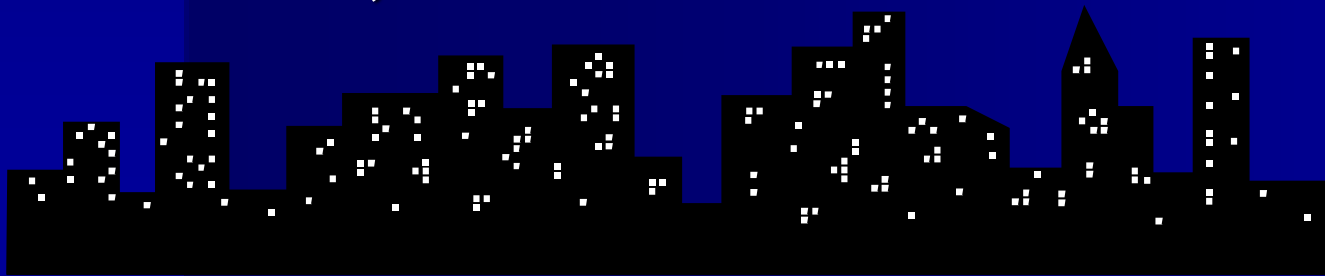


Max Weber

- Much of Weber's work was a critique or clarification of Marx
- His most famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* directly challenged Marx's ideas on the role of religion in society
- Weber was also interested in bureaucracies and the process of rationalization in society

The Development of Sociology in the United States

- American sociology had its beginnings at the University of Chicago in the early 20th century
- The early emphasis was on empirical study of communities and neighborhoods
- Later, East Coast schools such as Columbia and Harvard Universities began sociology departments, producing scholars such as W.E.B. Dubois, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton



Defining the Sociological Perspective

- **“Sociology is the scientific study of human society and social interactions.**
- **What makes sociology scientific**

SOCIOLOGY HAS BEEN DEFINED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS BY DIFFERENT SOCIOLOGISTS.

Emile Durkheim defines sociology as the "*science of social institutions*".

- **Kingsley Davis says** that "*sociology is a general science of society*".
- **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.*"

In general sense, sociology can be considered a science. The term science refers to the body of knowledge obtained by methods based upon systematic observation. Like other scientific disciplines, sociology engages in organized, systematic study of phenomena (human behaviour) in order to enhance understanding. Sociology is different from other sciences in certain respects.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIOLOGY.

1) **Sociology is a social sciences** that deals with social system and process ; sociology which focus on various aspects of human behaviour in the social world . We cannot predict human behaviour with absolute certainty or formulate principles and laws which are universally valid.

2) **Sociology is a general social science** that deals with society as a whole Sociology deals with big picture, the larger society, as well as the relationship among different aspects of society and the inter-connection between each of the parts and the society as a whole .

3) **Sociology is a pure science** , not an applied science Sociology is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge about society, knowledge that can be used for the betterment of society. The sociological knowledge we acquire about society will be a valuable School of Distance Education tool for social workers who want to build a better society. Sociology is a science of society that investigates social relationships, institutions and behaviours' and attempts to formulate some general principles.

4) **Sociology is relatively an abstract science** and not a concrete science Sociology is more concerned with the form of human events and their patterns. It is not interested in concrete-manipulation of human events.

5) **Sociology is generalizing and not a particularising or individualizing science** Sociology does not study each and every event that take place in society. It tries to find out the general laws or principles about human interaction and association, about the nature, form, content and structure of human groups and societies. Sociology tries to make generalization on the basis of study of some selected events.

6) **Sociology is a categorical and not a normative discipline** Sociology does not make any kind of value judgements. Sociology is ethically neutral. As a science, sociology is necessarily silent about questions of value.

7) **Sociology is an independent science** Sociology has now emerged into an independent science. As an independent science it has its own field of study, boundary, methods and concepts.

8) **Sociology is both a rational and empirical science.** As an empirical science sociology stresses on experience and the facts that result from observation and experimentation. Sociologists employ a wide variety of techniques to collect and analyse data of human experience. As a rational science it gives importance to reason and theories result from logical inference.

SUBJECT MATTER OF SOCIOLOGY

- Sociologist seeks to provide an analysis of human society with a sociological Perspective
- Sociology has been concerned with the **study of fundamental bases of social life** such as social relationships, personality, culture, social groups, institution, association community and social system.
- Sociology has given sufficient attention to the **study of the origin, development structure and functions** of wide variety of social institutions and organization both micro and macro level.
 - Sociology has given importance to **the study of social interaction** in everyday life in different socio- cultural and historical perspective.
 - Sociology has placed **high premium on the method of research**. Research in Sociology is becoming more and more rational and empirical. Sociologists have sought the application School of Distance Education of both qualitative and quantitative scientific methods in sociological research to go beyond surface level understanding of our **social lives in a better and new way**. • **Sociology is a fast growing discipline. It has several specialized areas of enquiry. Each of which may employ its own approach, method and techniques. Sociology of education, Sociology of Gender, Sociology of Media, Sociology of work and Leisure, Sociology of Consumption etc are the few among them.**

Scope of the sociology

The scope of sociology is extremely wide, ranging from the analysis of passing encounters between individuals on the street to the investigation of international relations and global forms of terrorism.

There are two main schools of thought regarding the scope of sociology.

- The specialistic or formalistic school of thought
- The synthetic school of thought

Specialistic or formalistic school of thought: George Simmel, Vierkandt, Max Weber, Small, Vonwiese and Tonnies are the main scholars of this school. According to Simmel and others "Sociology is a pure science and independent science. Sociology as a specific social science describes, classifies and analyses the form of social relationships. Small and Tonnies opine that sociology has only limited field.

The synthetic school of thought: Emile Durkheim, Morris Ginsberg, Hob house and Sorokin are the main advocates of this school. The synthetic school of thought conceives of sociology as a synthesis of the social science. Synthetic school says that sociology is a general science not a pure science or special social science. According to the views of the scholars "All parts of social life are intimately interrelated. Hence sociology should study social life as a whole. Durkheim says that sociology has three main fields of inquiry such as social morphology, Social physiology and general sociology. Ginsberg categorized the scope of sociology into four major branches such as social morphology, Social control, social process and social pathology.

Sociology has made remarkable progress. Its uses are widely recognized today. Its long run aim is to discover the basic structure of human society, to identify the main forces that hold groups together or weaken them, and to learn the conditions that transform social life.

- **Sociology is the scientific study of human life**, social groups, whole societies and the human world as such. ▪ Sociology gives us an awareness of cultural differences that allows us to see the social world from many perspectives.
- **Sociology provides the means of increasing our cultural sensitivities.**
- Sociology can provide us with self- enlightenment-increased self understanding, offering groups and individuals an increased opportunity to understand and alter the conditions of their own lives.
- Sociological research provides practical help in assessing the results of policy initiatives.
- Sociologists concern themselves directly with practical matters as professionals. Sociology is a subject with important practical implications. It can contribute to social criticism and practical social reform in several ways. The sociologist has a distinctive way of examining human interactions. Sociology is the systematic study of social behaviour and human groups. It focuses primarily on the influence of social relationships upon people's attitudes and behaviour and on how societies are established and change. As a field of study, sociology has an extremely broad scope

CRITICISM

The views of the formalistic schools are widely criticized. A few of the criticisms are follows:

- **Sociology is a general science.** It should study both the general form of social relationships along with their concrete contents.
- **Sociology should not make any distraction between the form of social relation and their contents.** Both are interrelated. Social forms are kept on changing when the contents change.
- Though **sociology is a pure science**, It is a general subject. It also concerned with human interaction and human life in general. Hence it is related to other social sciences

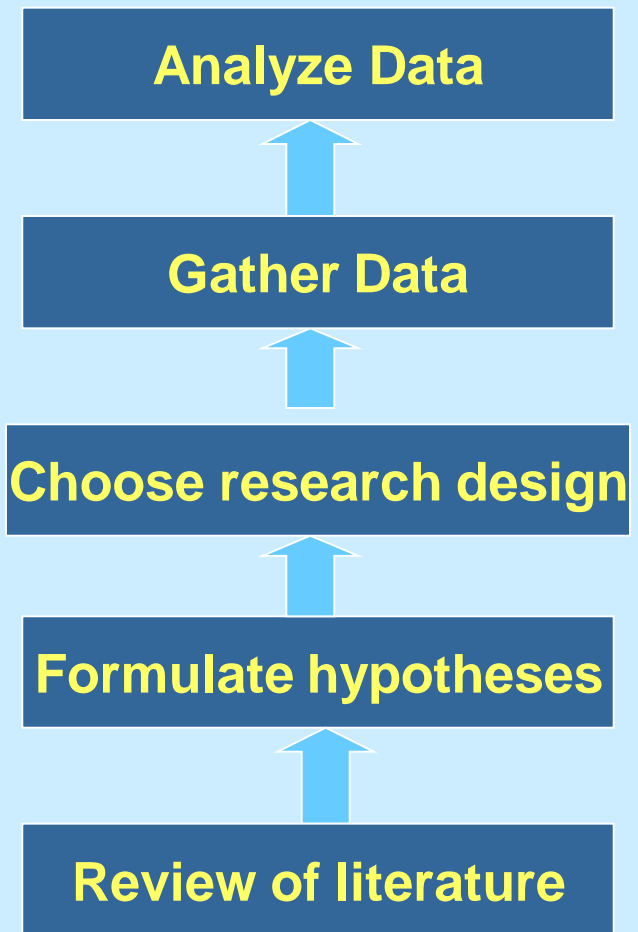
Sociology and Common Sense

- **Common sense assumptions are usually based on very limited observation.**
- **Moreover, the premises on which common sense assumptions are seldom examined.**
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 - **use a broad range of carefully selected observations; and**
 - **theoretically understand and explain those observations.**
- **While sociological research might confirm common sense observation, its broader base and theoretical rational provide a stronger basis for conclusions.**

Sociology and Science

- Science is “*...a body of systematically arranged knowledge that shows the operation of general laws.*”
- As a science, sociology employs the *scientific method*

The Scientific Method



Sociology and the Social Sciences

Cultural Anthropology

Psychology

Economics

History

Political Science

Social Work

Thank you

any doubts/questions please