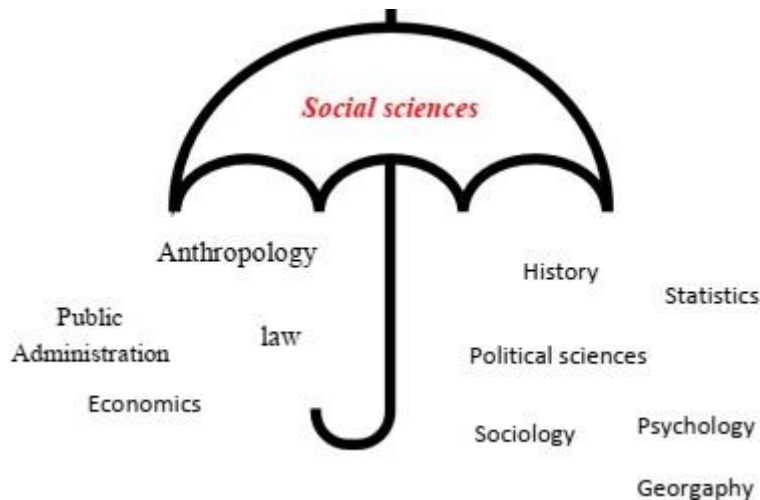


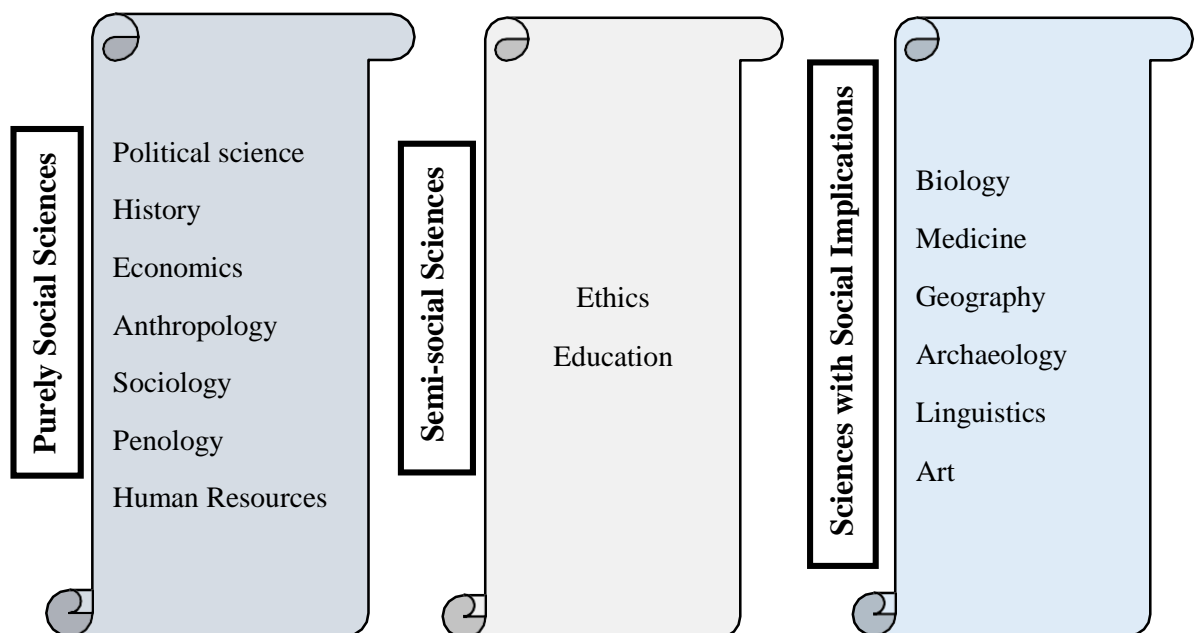
Section Two

The Main Disciplines in the field of Social Sciences

Social sciences is an umbrella term that include several different disciplines under its domain. The following illustration demonstrates the several disciplines that are included under the field of social sciences:



For more clarification, Seligman attempted to make a tri-division for the purpose of minimizing the confusion about the subjects that are incorporated under the area of social sciences. According to him, the subjects can be divided into three main classes:



In this vein, it is crucial to pinpoint that social sciences as a multidisciplinary field is featured with flexibility. That is to the area of social sciences has no mono-disciplinary character but a combination of many disciplines having social implications. All in all, social science is commonly used as generic term to refer to a plurality of fields outside of the natural sciences.

The main ones that you need to know at this stage are: are archaeology, economics, geography, history, linguistics, political science, sociology, and in certain contexts psychology (Verheggen et al 1999).

1. **Economics:** is the social science that deals with the ways in which men and societies seek to satisfy their material needs and desires. Alfred Marshall has defined economics as the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life. Adam Smith defines it as the science of wealth. There are many fields of applied economics along with special subfields of economics theory and economic history. The main area is money, banking and business, public finance, international economics, labor and industrial relations, land and agricultural economics, business organization, public utilities and transportation. Economics is becoming increasingly professional and specialized. Economics could attain much more important position in social science. Economics is a Social Science that seeks to analyze and describe the production distribution and consumption of wealth.
2. **Political Science:** is a social science concerned with the theory and practice of politics and the description and the analysis of political systems and political behavior. Political scientists see themselves engaged in revealing the relationships underlying political events and conditions, and from these revelations they attempt to construct general principles about the way the world of politics works (Lane 1996).
3. **Sociology:** is the study of society. It is a social science-a term with which it is sometimes synonymous- that uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop and refine a body of knowledge about human social activity, and apply such knowledge to the pursuit of social welfare. Its subject

matter ranges from the micro level of agency and interaction to the macro level of systems and social structure (Giddens 2007).

4. **Psychology:** is the study of human or animal mental functions and behaviors. In this field, a professional practitioner or researcher is a psychologist. Psychologists are classified as social or behavioral scientists. Psychological research can be considered either basic or applied. Psychologists attempt to understand the role of mental functions in individual and social behavior, while also exploring underlying physiological and neurological processes.
5. **History:** is the study of the human past, scholars who write about history are called *historians*. It is a field of research which uses a narrative to examine and analyze the sequence of events and it sometimes attempts to investigate objectively the patterns of cause and effect that determine events. Historians debate the nature of history and its usefulness (Evans, Richard J. 2001). The study of history helps make sense of humankind. It also helps people understand the things that happen today and that may happen in the future. History **was earlier** a Humanities discipline but in modern times enjoys an ambiguous status. It is at present designated as a social science more often now since it started using the methodology of Social Sciences.
6. **Geography:** is the study of the earth and its lands, features, inhabitants, and phenomena. A literal translation would be to describe or write about the Earth. Four historical traditions in geographical research are the spatial analysis of natural and human phenomena (geography as a study of distribution), area studies (places and regions), study of man-land relationship, and research in earth sciences (Pattison 1990). Nonetheless, modern geography is an all-encompassing discipline that foremost seeks to understand the Earth and all of its human and natural complexities—not merely where objects are, but how they have changed and come to be. Geography has been called ‘the world discipline’ (Bonnet 2008).
7. **Archaeology:** is the study of the ancient times with respect to society and culture. The traces of those events can be found in material remains i.e. the artifacts, burials, ruined buildings, monuments, etc. and are studied by archaeologists. They interpret them to provide knowledge about the times to which these artifacts belong. The study of Archaeology also includes the written records that are very ancient and

cannot be easily deciphered or understood. These sources give more reliable and authentic information. Most of the time, such traces are found buried underground and have to be dug out. This is called archaeological excavation. Archaeological sources also include inscriptions, pillars, metal plates, coins, seals, monuments, tools, pottery, toys, pictures etc. Works of art like paintings, sculptures, architecture, etc. tell us about the culture of particular periods.

The Correlation between History and Archaeology

The study of **History** helps us to know our roots, strengths and achievements and gives us a sense of pride as well as direction. What we call progress would be non-existent if we do not have proper knowledge and understanding of our past. There is a general belief that history deals with the past, which we think is dead. In reality, our past has important lessons for the present and the future. History records this legacy that has an important bearing on our lives. In essence, history relates the story of cooperative actions of a large number of men and women in their quest for a better life. When we think of how we can know about our past, we get connected to Archaeology. Often these past activities and achievements bring a sense of pride for us and for our future generations.

There is a long-standing tradition, in both archaeology and history, to consider the former as a source-studying, a branch of the latter (Meneses, 1965, p. 22; Zimmerman and Dasovich, 1990, p. 1; Klein, 1993, p. 729). European archaeology sprang out of philology (Champion, 1990, p. 89) through history and its role as a “handmaiden to history” was a result of a very specific definition of history as an interpretive discipline which uses different sources, studied by technicians (like palaeographers, in charge of manuscripts), and archaeologists, collecting artifacts (Austin, 1990) and art objects (Bandinelli, 1984, p. 157; 1994). American archaeology followed a different development, being always considered as part of anthropology (Deetz, 1967, p.3; Trigger, 1989b, p. 19; Smith, 1992, p. 24; Renfrew, 1993, p.73), even though it has also often been interpreted as a discipline bound to collect data to be interpreted by a true social scientist the anthropologist. Most recent students of the discipline would, however, agree that “archaeology is a social science in the sense that it tries to explain what has happened to specific groups of human beings in the past and to generalize

about processes of cultural change” (Trigger, 1990, p. 19).

It is considered an independent discipline closely related to history and other social sciences (Otto, 1975, p.11; Patterson, 1990, p.5). Archaeology becomes increasingly historical in orientation (Trigger, 1984, p. 295) and in practice history and anthropology converge (Sherratt, 1992, p. 139), as archaeologists and anthropologists express the need for a more historically based human science, and historians realize that anthropological and archaeological enquiry has become crucial for history (Knapp, 1992, p.3). The renewed interest in Benjamin, a pioneer in the use of material culture and excavations as metaphors in historical analysis, is felt not only in post-processual archaeology but also in the other related human and social sciences (Härke and Wolfram, 1993, p.184; Funari, 1996a, pp. 52-53).

A dialogue between archaeology and history is thus a must (Moreland, 1992, p. 126). In some quarters, particularly in the Americas, an opposition between history and theory has been claimed by some archaeologists (Hodder, 1991, p. 10) but this misguided approach has been counteracted by pleas for an interdisciplinary collaboration, as emphasized the Uruguayan archaeologist José María López (n.d., p.62). Some archaeologists would go up to the point of defining archaeology as an historical discipline (Fonseca, 1990; Newell, 1991), a special kind of social history (Cerdà, 1991, p. 420). There is an acknowledgment that history is a vital element in archaeological interpretation (Little, 1988, p. 264; Little and Schackel, 1992, p. 4) and that archaeologists must rely on both written and material evidence (Orser, 1987, p. 131).

The Relationship between Archaeology and Geography

The study of History and Archaeology remains incomplete without knowing something about the Geography of the area being studied. Geography is the study of the earth's landscapes, people, places and environment. In simple terms, it is knowing about the world in which we live. Geography is unique in bridging the social sciences (human geography) with the natural sciences (physical geography).

Geography plays an important role in shaping the life and history of any society. It helps us to recognize the differences in cultures, political systems, economies, landscapes and environments across the world. It also helps us to establish links among them. Geography provides an ideal framework for relating to other fields of knowledge, too. If we know the geography of a country, we can understand what happened in

history. In this lesson, you will read that early humans made bows, arrows and other small tools. It is from studying Geography that you get to know why. After ice age, changes in environment must have taken place. As a result, many dense forests might have become grasslands. Can you imagine what must have happened? Yes, it led to a growing population of grass eating animals like the deer, goat, sheep and the antelope. You also know that these animals can run fast. So hunting them was not easy with heavy weapons. These light stone weapons, which the early humans had invented, helped them in their survival.

Interestingly, the relationship between archaeology and geography gave birth to a new field called landscape archaeology. This is a rather broad field that tries to understand how human beings and cultures are related to their environment in the past - in terms of ecology, transportation, agriculture, and a host of other spatially-based questions. However, the common denominator for landscape archaeological research is space as well as time - how is space used, and how are sites related to spatial factors? For example, how land use changed as people moved out from a site? (Usually this meant intensive farming close to the site and extensive land use). What determined the placement of roads? What determined the placement of fields and farms? All these kinds of questions are landscape archaeology, which joins classical archaeology to geography.

Natural and Social Sciences

What is **Science**? Science, broadly speaking, is the systematic study of all things, natural and social. It is the act of arriving at the truth, analyzing it, determining the relationships between facts and the formulation of causal explanations. These explanations are continuously verified, validated and testable hypotheses are arrived at. The hallmark of a scientific exercise is supposed to be 'empirical proof' or 'objective truth' which is verifiable through sense perception. The goal of science, therefore, is to arrive at the absolute truth by criticism and the natural world is the most appropriate object of study in such a context.

Natural Sciences is the study of the external, natural world. The natural sciences acquire knowledge through direct observation of phenomena. By involving in a series of experiments scientists create axioms which can be correctly applied to the natural world. Axioms are conclusions drawn from experiments in the natural sciences and considered to be true till they are contradicted. The disciplines that are categorized as

natural sciences are astronomy, earth sciences, physics, chemistry, and biology. The growth of modern science since the late 17th century has led to it being considered as the most reliable form of knowledge and the method it uses, as the best way to arrive at the 'truth' of a phenomena. The physical sciences tend to examine the world and its phenomena objectively without reference to or consideration of human meaning or purpose which is a key aspect of the humanities.

There are two kinds of phenomena, natural and social. While natural phenomena exist without the intervention of people, social phenomena exist only as a result of human interaction. When social behavior of human beings is explained and predicted with the help of scientific methods, the body of knowledge thus created is called Social sciences. Sociology, political science, psychology and economics fall under this category. Social Science tried to emulate the methods of natural sciences in arriving at the 'truth' but since Social Science deals with the social environment, the same Scientific method could not be applied to explain and predict the human behavior. Natural Science gives us an insight into what things 'are', 'were' and 'would be' whereas Social Sciences are involved closely with problems of 'what is' and 'what should be'. It is involved with the betterment of humankind. The Natural Sciences deal with quantifiable data but Social Sciences deal with data that are not measurable or controllable, that is, data like values, beliefs, subjectivity and morals. Moreover, since human experience is open to interpretation in a thousand ways, both rational and irrational, it is difficult to apply the scientific method in social sciences.