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# 'A' LEVEL SOCIOLOGY NOTES



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# TOPIC 1

## PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY

- Historical development of sociology
- Sociology and social policy
- Sociology as a science
- Relationship between sociology and other social sciences
- Theoretical perspectives

### WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology is a term which was coined by Auguste Comte from two words: - The

- Latin word: - socius meaning associate or companion and
- Greek word - logia meaning study of).

Frenchman Auguste Comte in the 1830s proposed an imitation of science (**synthetic science**) uniting all knowledge about human activity. Sociology is considered as a social science. Scholars have defined sociology differently; the following are some of the definitions of sociology.

1. "Sociology may be defined as the study of society - web of human interactions and relationships" (Ginsberg, 1939)
2. Sugarman 1968 defines sociology as "the **objective** study of human behaviour in so far as it is affected by the fact people live in groups"
3. Sociology is the **scientific** study of human society through the investigation of people's social behaviour" (Giner, 1978)
4. "Sociology is the study of individuals in a social setting ... Sociologists study the interrelationships between individuals, organizations, cultures and societies". (Ritzer 1979)
5. Giddens (1989) defines sociology as the study of human social life, groups and societies.
  - ❖ Sociology is therefore the study of human behaviour in groups (**human societies**).
  - ❖ It is the **systematic study** of human beings and human behaviour in groups that make up **society**.
  - ❖ Society consists of individuals belonging to groups of different sizes.

Sociology studies the relationship or interaction between the self (the individual) and groups and interaction between groups. The individual (self) may affect certain groups and is affected by groups. Durkheim and Mills concur that society shaped individuals; while at the same time individuals contribute to shaping the society. Twentieth century French Sociologist Emile Durkheim considered that the individual was a product of his or her society. Both Durkheim and Mills strongly believed that 'the most intimate features of the person are socially patterned and even implanted.

Sociology being the "**study of human society**"; there is need for one to know a number of concepts and terms used in the subject. There are **three** main areas one has to consider;

1. **Social structures** (e.g. the family, education, religion, social stratification, etc.): -
  - This deals with the way our individual lives are built around social relationships and the rules we have developed to govern such relationships.
  - Sociologists argue that our individual choices of behaviour are shaped by the relationships we form or that have been imposed on us.
2. **Social systems** (e.g. culture and identity, agents of social control, etc.)
  - Our individual choices are patterned by the cultures and subcultures that we share in our social groupings
  - There are also agents of social control like religion that regulate human behaviour

- Behaviour is also regulated by our identity for example gender
- 3. **Social issues** (e.g. the causes of crime, marital breakdowns and the impact of unemployment, etc.)

### ❖ THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION (Wright Mills, 1959)

- This was coined by Wright Mills (1959).
- Realises the relationship between individual lives and society which people often fail to notice.
- Mills asserts that 'many **great public issues** as well as many **private troubles** are described in terms of the 'psychiatric' (individual) - thus ignoring and avoiding the larger problems of modern society.
- Durkheim's study of suicide offers a relevant example. Durkheim argues that social forces and structures were responsible for driving individuals to suicide. Suicide is not merely the result of mental and psychological disorders.
- Mills and Durkheim both believed that society shaped individuals, but they also believed that individuals contributed to shaping the society.
- Mills noted that people may blame themselves for troubles they face without taking into account social forces and the effects they have on their lives.
- ✿ The sociological imagination enables us to distinguish between **personal troubles** and **public issues**.
- According to Mills (1959) **troubles** are private matters that affect the individual. They have to do with one's self and with one's limitations.
- Mills (1959) goes on to assert that **issues** go beyond (transcend) individual problems but affect the larger society. An issue is thus a public matter, dealing with aspects of large society or structure involving a crisis in institutional arrangements.
- Let us consider the examples of unemployment as demonstrated by Mills.
  - ✚ He explains that if an ordinary man is unemployed he will automatically consider this situation as his or her personal failure (**personal trouble**). He may even be condemned by the society as a lazy person.
  - ✚ However, if there are thousands of other individuals in the same situation, then it becomes a **public issue** and should be treated as such.
- Another good example of this is **divorce**. If only a few divorces occur in society then it can be seen as personal troubles of the people involved. When a relatively high percentage of people are getting divorced every year then divorce becomes a public issue where institutions like marriage and law need to be looked at. (Mills 1959:13)

### The significance of sociological knowledge

- **Sociology makes a scientific study of society:**
  - Scientific study of the society has been possible through sociology; it is based on many of today's world problems.
  - **Sociology studies role of the institutions in the development of the individuals:**
    - It is through sociology that scientific study of the great social institutions and the relation of the individual to each is being made.
 

○ The home and family,	○ the state and government,
○ the school and education,	○ industry and work,
○ the church and religion,	○ the community and association,
- These are institutions through which society functions.
- Sociology studies these institutions and their role in the development of the individual and suggests suitable measures for strengthening them with a view to enable them to serve the individual better.
- **Sociology helps in understanding and planning of society:**
  - For effective planning for society knowledge of the mechanism of society is important.
  - It helps us to determine the most efficient means for reaching the goals agreed upon within society, a certain amount of knowledge about society is necessary before any social policies can be carried out.
- **Sociology works in the solution of social problems:**

- The present world is suffering from many problems which can be solved through scientific study of the society.
- It is the task of sociology to study the social problems through the methods of scientific research and to find out solution to them.
- The scientific study of human affairs will ultimately provide the body of knowledge and principles that will enable us to control the conditions of social life and improve them.
- **Sociology has drawn our attention to the intrinsic worth and dignity of man:**
  - Sociology helps us know and appreciate other people in other areas.
- **Sociology has changed our outlook with regard to the problems of crime etc.:**
  - It is through the study of sociology that our whole outlook on various aspects of crime has change.
  - The criminals are nowadays treated as human beings suffering from mental deficiencies and efforts are accordingly made to rehabilitate them as useful members of the society.
- **Sociology has made great contribution to enrich human culture:**
  - Human culture has been made richer by the contribution of sociology.
  - According to Lowie most of us harbour the comfortable misconception that our way of doing things is the only sensible if not only possible one.
  - Sociology has given us training to have sensible approach to questions concerning oneself, one's religion, customs, morals and institutions.
  - It has further taught us to be, critical and objective.
  - It enables man to have a better understanding both of one and of others.
- **Sociology helps in solutions to international problems:**
  - The world today is viewed as one village because of progress made by physical sciences, however in the social field the world has been left behind by the revolutionary progress of the science.
  - The world is divided politically giving rise to stress and conflict. Men have failed to bring in peace. Sociology can help us in understanding the underlying causes and tensions and thus find solutions.
- **Sociology keeps us update on modern situations:**
  - It adds to the knowledge of the society.
  - It helps the individual find his relation to society.

Sociology has a strong appeal to all types of mind through its direct bearing upon many of the initial problems of the present world.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

The development of the discipline was a result of two major forces.

- ❖ Intellectual forces and
- ❖ Social forces

### A. **Intellectual forces:** -

- Modern day sociology is rooted in the works of philosophers and scientists of the great enlightenment dating back to the scientific discoveries of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Development of modern science is often credited to Newton after he developed the laws of motion and gravity.
- Sociologists today argue that just as such laws that have been developed in the natural world there are also laws to explain the social world.
- Comte stressed the importance positivism which is the belief that the world can best be understood through scientific inquiry. He talks of the laws of social dynamics and social statics or the law of progress and order, change and stability.
- The social world and the social man according to Comte were supposed to be studied in the same scientific manner as the work of nature.

- The new social science (sociology) that Comte sought to model, he first called social physics and later on sociology, the use of social physics made it clear that Comte sought to model sociology after the hard or natural sciences.
  - During the period of the enlightenment, there was a replacement of: -
    - the supernatural and the natural;
    - of religion by science;
    - of divine decree by natural law and
    - priest by philosophers;
  - There was the approval of reason guided by experience as the instrument that would solve all problems.
- B. Social forces: -**
- Related to the intellectual forces because they are the effects of the enlightenment. There are six of them.
- 1) Political revolution**
- A long series of political revolutions ushered in by the French Revolution in 1789 carrying over through the 19th century was the most immediate factor in the rise of sociological theorising
  - What attracted the attention of many were the negative effects or changes brought about by such revolutions.
  - The writers were united by a desire to restore order to society.
- 2) Industrial revolution and the role of capitalism**
- This revolution was about interrelated developments that led to the transformation of the western world from a largely agricultural to a largely industrial system. During this period large numbers of people left farms for factories.
  - In the capitalist system a few profited greatly while the majority worked long hours for low wages.
- 3) Rise of socialism**
- Although some sociologists favoured socialism as a solution to industrial problems others were opposed to it.
  - Karl Marx was as an active supporter of the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist system.
  - Durkheim and Max Weber opposed socialism.
- 4) Urbanisation**
- Partly as a result of the industrial revolution, large number of people were uprooted from, their rural homes to urban areas.
  - The expansion of cities produced a number of problems such as: -
    - Overcrowding.
    - Pollution.
    - Noise.
    - Traffic etc.
  - This attracted the attention of early sociologists such as Max Weber and Sociologists at the Chicago School
- 5) Religious change**
- Many early sociologists came from religious background and were actively involved in religion.
- 6) The growth of science**
- As sociology was being developed there was an increasing emphasis on science.
  - Thus sociologists from the beginning wanted to model sociology after the successful physical and biological science.
  - ❖ Debate soon developed between those who wholeheartedly, accepted the scientific model and those who thought that the unique characteristic of social life makes it difficult to apply the scientific model.

Sociology has seen its development also a result of the contribution of what we can call the founding fathers. These are the people who because of the problems highlighted above began to theorize in an effort to find solutions to the new problems that faced social life. Today most of our ideas are guided by the theorizing of the founding fathers of the discipline.

## FOUNDING FATHERS OF SOCIOLOGY

### AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857) Functionalist

- He coined the term "sociology."
- He believed the study of social phenomena should employ scientific techniques.
- Comte was disturbed by the chaos of French society and was critical of the enlightenment and the French revolution.
- For Comte it was intellectual change that was needed and not social or revolutionary change.
- Comte focused on the larger groupings for analysis e.g. the family rather than the individual.
- It was Comte's view that society is not mainly characterised by conflict between the workers and capitalist as Karl Marx did.
- Comte developed an evolutionary theory of social change in his law of the three stages.
  - He argued that social disorder was caused by ideas left over from the idea systems of earlier stages.
  - Only when a scientific footing for the governing of society was established would the social disorders of his time cease.
- Comte also stressed the systematic character of society and accorded great importance to the role of consensus on this he influenced scholars like Spencer and Parsons.
- Comte argued for the need to do sociological research through observation, experimentation and comparative historical analysis. To this day, in their inquiries sociologists continue to use the methods of observation, experimentation, comparison and historical research. These beliefs made Comte a forerunner of positivism and reformism in classical sociological theory.
- First and foremost, Comte's positivism - has influenced profoundly the ways in which sociologists conduct sociological inquiry. Comte argued that sociologist (and other scholars), through theory, speculation, and empirical research, could create a realist science that would accurately "copy" or represent the way things actually are in the world.
- Furthermore, Comte argued that sociology could become a "social physics" that is a social science on a par with the most positivistic of sciences like physics.
- Comte believed that sociology would eventually occupy the very peak of a hierarchy of sciences.
- While Comte did write about methods of research, he most often engaged in speculation or abstract/mental theorizing in order to attempt to discover invariant laws of the social world.

#### Social statics and dynamics

Comte separated **social statics** from **social dynamics**.

- **Social statics:** - concerned with the ways in which the parts of a social system interact with one another, as well as the functional relationships between the parts and to the social system as a whole. This gives a stable environment which leads to maintenance of the status quo. There is therefore no change.
- Comte therefore focused his social statics on the individual, as well as such collective phenomena as the family, religion, language, and the division of labour.

Comte placed greater emphasis on the study of social dynamics, or social change.

- His theory of social dynamics is founded on the law of the three stages; i.e. the evolution of society is based on the evolution of mind through the theological, metaphysical, and positivist stages.
- He saw social dynamics as a process of progressive evolution in which people become cumulatively more intelligent and in which altruism/selflessness eventually triumphs over egoism/selfishness.

#### Comte's "law of the three stages"

The law of three stages is an example of Comte's search **for invariant laws** governing the social world. Comte argued that the human mind, individual human beings, all knowledge, and world history develop through three successive stages.

1. The theological stage is dominated by a search for the essential nature of things.

- People come to believe that all phenomena are created and influenced by gods and supernatural forces.
- Monotheism is the ultimate belief of the theological stage.



2. **The metaphysical stage** is a transitional stage in which mysterious, abstract forces (e.g., nature) replace supernatural forces as the powers that explain the workings of the world.
3. **The positivist stage** is the last and highest stage in Comte's work.
  - In this stage, people search for invariant laws that govern all of the phenomena of the world.
  - Comte also used the term positivism in the sense that it is a force that could counter the negativism of his times.
  - Positivism, in Comte's philosophy, would bring order and progress to the European crisis of ideas.
  - Comte's philosophical **idealism** thus separates his views from those of his contemporary Karl Marx (1818-1883), who was a **materialist**.

### **KARL MARX (1818-83)**

- Founder of Marxism although he personally said he was not a Marxist.
- For Marx there is fundamental conflict between different groups, Classes in society.
- This conflict is on-going and persistent and not temporary as Functionalists would propose.

### **Basic Ideas**

#### **1. How is Society Constructed?**

- Marx noted that in order to survive we enter relationships in order to ensure production.
- The forces of production and the social relationship to this form the economic basis or **infrastructure** of society.
- The other aspect of society, known as the superstructure (e.g. education system) is shaped by the infrastructure (economic base).
- The Education system (super structure) is shaped by economic factors according to Marx.
- Any change in the infrastructure according to Marx will thus lead to changes in the superstructure.
- Marx claims that all societies today contain contradictions.
  - He believed that such a position could not continue forever.
  - According to Marx, society is constructed from classes.
  - In all societies, except the simplest, there are two major classes.
  - It is people's relationship to the means of production that determines which class they belong to.
  - The most powerful class is that which owns the means of production, (land, **labour**, factories) and the least powerful is that which has to sell its labour to make a living.
  - This creates conflict of interests, as one social group, the owners of the factors of production benefits on the back of the others (the workers).
  - One group **exploits another social group**.

### **How a society operates or functions. Explaining the Contradictions/conflict**

#### **1. The First Conflict: Wages versus Profit Achieved by the Bourgeoisie**

- In Marx's view,
  - Society operates mainly through class conflict.
  - In a capitalistic society the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are fundamentally opposed.
  - Real wealth was only created by the labour power of the workers. Yet the wages that are paid to them is well below that taken in profit by the people who own the factors of production. This is a major **contradiction that results in societal conflict**.

#### **2. The Second Conflict: Organization versus the Nature of Ownership**

- In capitalism large numbers of workers, acting collectively achieve production while in contrast, just one individual owns the factors of production and the profits do not flow to the workers who have organized themselves collectively.

### **What Causes Social Change?**

- Major changes according to Marx are a result of new forces of production.
- He used the change from Feudal society run by the noblemen, clergy, and commoners and based upon heredity.

- There was little movement within the Feudal system.
- Feudalism was based upon ownership of the land.
- The commoners who worked the land had to give part of their produce to the landowners; in return, the landowners protected them to rival noblemen.
- The change between this system to capitalism resulted in contradictions/conflicts. For example, capitalism is based upon wage labour, whereas feudalism was based upon mutual obligations.
- As the new order, capitalism took over; it removed the old social relationships of feudalism and replaced them with the new. Marx called this a new Epoch.
- Eventually Marx believed there would be a final Epoch where a communistic or socialist society would take over from capitalism.
- This will not be the result of a new force of production, but will get rid of the contradictions/conflicts that so far characterized change between Epochs.
- Collective production would remain but ownership would change dramatically.
- Instead of the Bourgeoisie, owning the factors of production ownership will be by all.
- Members would share wealth that their labour produces.
- This new infrastructure would not be based upon exploitation and contradictions, instead a new final epoch would be born, one, which would have no need to change.
- It would thus result in the end of history because in Marx's view history of man is history of class struggle.

#### **Why Capitalism has survived in these massive Contradictions?**

- Capitalism has remained durable; in the West it has survived for 200 years.
- Marx claimed this is the result of the role of the superstructure, which is shaped by the infrastructure. So for example, the ruling elite **have** monopolized political power, laws, and other institutions to **maintain their control**.
- Propagating the ideas of equality and freedom has done this. For example, the relationship between the worker and the owner of the factors of production is seen as equal exchange. However, in reality it is not. Although there is a degree of choice of who to work for, in reality we must work to survive.
- In Marx's words, *all we can do is exchange one form of wage slavery for another*.
- More importantly, the ruling elite are able to dominate the ideology of the time.
- They are able to produce a false picture of the world as it is moreover to stop us seeing the contradictions. We see our exploitation as just, natural, and proper; Marx calls this a **false consciousness** of reality.
- Capitalists have thus managed to legitimate their power and hide from the people the true nature of their exploitation

#### **EMILE DURKHEIM (1858-1917) Social Integration and Social Facts**

- David Emile Durkheim was born on April 15, 1858 in Epinal, capital town of the department of Vosges, in Lorraine in a family of Rabbis (Teachers).
- One of the greatest sociologists of the late 19th century, Durkheim grew up in France after it lost the war with Germany in 1870.
- Durkheim legitimized sociology in France and became a dominant force in the development of the discipline worldwide.
- Much of his work is concerned with **what holds society together, and what makes people work together; Social solidarity**, differentiating between mechanical and organic solidarity.
- He contended that the distinctive subject matter of sociology should be the study of social facts, which is the importance of the collective consciousness.
- On August 3, 1914, Germany launched its invasion of Belgium and northern France.
- Durkheim was at first unaffected by the war until he was shocked by his son's death on the war front in 1916; he withdrew into an "aggressive silence", forbidding friends from even mentioning his son's name in his presence, he collapsed from stroke and recovered but on November 15, 1917, died aged 59.
- Today he is mainly remembered for four books. Namely:
  1. **The Rules of Sociological Method:** -
    - Concerned with the differences between sociology and the other social sciences.
    - This book helped to establish sociology as a university discipline.



## 2. The Division of Labour in Society: -

- Concerned with the transition between traditional agricultural societies and modern urban industrial societies, and the differences in social organization between them.

## 3. Suicide: - his most famous book

- Where he asks the question why people kill themselves.
- For this book he gathered a mass of statistical information from government records. (Scientific method)

## 4. Elementary forms of religion: - In this later work, Durkheim turned to the religion of primitive societies to demonstrate this.

- Here, Emile Durkheim examines religion in society in terms of animism, naturism, totemism, myth, and ritual.
  - Durkheim questions the origin of religion, which for him means discerning the ever-present elements that underlie the essential forms of religious thought and practice.
  - Durkheim's choice of out-dated religion as a frame of reference for the analysis and explanation of all religion was to him the one approach best adapted, not only to final understanding of the religious nature of man, but also to revealing an essential and permanent aspect of humanity.
  - Durkheim concluded that religion, philosophy, and morals can be understood only as products of the social condition of man:
    - ✚ That the source of religion and morality is in the collective mind of society and not inherent in the isolated minds of individuals.
  - His methods and conclusions must be grasped by anyone seeking understanding of the bases of religion and society.
- Although Durkheim was politically liberal, he took a more conservative/traditional position intellectually, arguing that the social disorders produced by striking social changes could be reduced through social reform.
  - Durkheim argued that sociology was the study of structures that are external to and coercive over, the individual; for example, legal codes and shared moral beliefs, which he called social facts.
  - In Suicide Durkheim demonstrated that social facts could cause individual behaviour.
  - He argued that societies were held together by a strongly held collective morality called the collective conscience.
 

Because of the complexity of modern societies, the collective conscience had become weaker, resulting in a variety of social problems.

### How does a society function?

Emile Durkheim's theories of **functionalism, anomie, and division of labour** will help us answer this question.

### **Society Structure & Social Facts**

- Durkheim's theories were founded on the concept of **social facts**, defined as the norms, values, and structures of a society.
- Durkheim's theories were founded on things external in nature, as opposed to those internal in nature, such as the motivations and desires of individuals. This is how he differs from other sociologists of his time.
- According to Durkheim, collective consciousness (collective conscience), values, and rules are critical to a functional society.

### **Functionalism**

- Emphasizes a societal equilibrium.
  - If something happens to disrupt the order and the flow of the system, society must adjust to achieve a stable state.
- According to Durkheim, society should be analysed and described in terms of functions.
  - Society is a system of interrelated parts where no one part can function without the other.

- These parts make up the whole of society.
- If one part changes, it has an impact on society as a whole.
- For example, the **state** provides public education for children.
- The **family** of the children pay taxes, which the state uses for public education.
- The **children** who learn from public education go on to become **law-abiding and working citizens**, who pay taxes to **support the state**.
- Let's look at this example again.
- The state provides public education for children. But if a disturbance or imbalance in the education system occurs - perhaps the children drop out and become criminals. The system adjusts in order to improve the education and attempts to rehabilitate the criminals (through jail or other means) in order for them to become law-abiding and taxpaying citizens.
- To Durkheim crime and delinquent behaviour are a normal and necessary occurrence in the social system. He proposed that crime led to reactions from society about the crime.
- These shared reactions were used to create a common consensus of what individuals felt were moral and ethical norms by which to abide. EG people unite to fight against crime. These commonly held norms and values led to boundaries and rules for the society.

## Division of Labour

- Durkheim's concept of the **division of labour** focused on the shift in societies from a simple society to one that is more complex.
- Durkheim argued that traditional societies were made up of homogenous people that were more or less the same in terms of values, religious beliefs, and backgrounds.
- Modern societies, in contrast, are made up of complex division of labour, beliefs, and backgrounds.
  - In traditional societies, the collective consciousness ruled, social norms were strong, and social behaviour was well regulated.
  - In modern societies, common consciousness was less obvious and the regulation of social behaviour was less corrective and more restrictive aiming to restore normal activity to society.

## Mechanical & Organic Solidarity

### 1. Mechanical solidarity

- Occurs when individuals within structural units are alike and self-sufficient. For example, in traditional societies, people grew their own food, made their own clothes, and had little need for extensive social contact with others because they did not have to rely on others for daily needs.

### 2. Organic solidarity

- When a large population is stratified into smaller structural units.
- There's a high level of interdependence among individuals and structures, but there's still a division of people along lines of labour type. (There is specialization under organic solidarity giving rise to professions such as nurses, doctors bankers teachers etc.)
- Durkheim recognized that things like increased communication, transportation, and interaction with others resulted in the social change from a mechanical solidarity to organic.
- If societies develop too quickly from traditional to modern, a breakdown of norms and collective consciousness occurs. The concept of community and social constraints becomes weakened, and this leads to disorder, crisis, and **anomie**.

## Anomie

- The concept of **anomie** refers to the breakdown of social norms and guidance for the citizens of a society.

- Anomie occurs when society has little influence on individuals' tendency to follow rules and norms, and individuals are, therefore, left without moral guidance.
- Individuals do not feel attached to the collective society.
- Anomie causes the feelings of alienation among individuals because they feel like their only attachment is to the system in which they don't believe or they don't feel a part of it.
- It also causes feelings of frustration and a sense of deprivation.
- Durkheim's work entitled *Suicide* is a clear demonstration of the concept of anomie.
- Durkheim argued that individuals have a certain level of attachment or social integration within their societal groups.
- Abnormally high or low levels of social integration may result in suicide.
  - High levels cause people to feel like they are a burden on their social group, leading them to kill themselves
  - Low levels of social integration result in feelings of being lost or in a disorganized society, resulting in suicide.

### **MARX WEBER (1864-1920) Rationality and modernity, methodology of social investigation, religion and economic development**

- Born on April 21 1864 being the eldest in a family seven children.
- Both parents were of protestant backgrounds and were refugees of catholic persecution in the past who had become successful business persons.
- Max Weber was intelligent yet sickly, shy and withdrawn.
- His teachers complained about his lack of respect for authority and lack of discipline.
- His father ruled the home with an iron fist.
- In his youth he identified with his father even though his mother made efforts to draw him to her side.
- At eighteen and in university he was one of "the boys" joining his father's duelling fraternity and studying law like his father (he was taking after his father).
- Besides law he studied economics, history and philosophy; Weber also read a great deal of theology.
- When he joined military service Weber was influenced by his mother's sister and uncle, he began appreciating his mother's religious values.
- Weber saw sociology as a comprehensive science of social action.
- Unlike Spencer, Durkheim, and Marx who focused on social structures Weber focused on the individual human actors.
- His primary focus was the personal meanings that human actors attach to their actions in their mutual/joint/shared orientations within specific social historical contexts.
- Argued for a sociological inquiry that generated its theory from: -
  - rich,
  - systematic,
  - empirical,
  - Historical research.
- This approach required, first of all, an examination of the relationships between, and the respective roles of history and sociology in inquiry.

Weber argued that sociology was to develop concepts for the analysis of concrete phenomena, which would allow sociologists to then make generalizations about historical phenomena.

History, on the other hand, would use sociological concepts in order to perform causal analysis of particular historical events, structures, and processes.

- According to Weber, sociology and history are interdependent.
- Weber argued that understanding, or *verstehen*, was the proper way of studying social phenomena.
- The method of *verstehen* strives to understand the meanings that human beings attribute to their experiences, interactions, and actions.

- Weber took verstehen as a methodical, systematic, and rigorous form of inquiry that could be employed in both macro- and micro-sociological analysis.
- Weber's creation of causation stresses the great variety of factors that may precipitate the emergence of complex phenomena such as modern capitalism.
- Weber argued that social scientists, unlike natural scientists, must take into account the meanings that actors attribute to their interactions when considering causality.
- ❖ Weber's greatest contribution to sociology is known as the ideal type.

#### ▪ **The ideal type**

- Basically it is a theoretical model constructed by means of a detailed empirical study of a phenomenon.
- An ideal type is an intellectual construct that a sociologist may use to study historical realities by means of their similarities to, and divergences/differences from, the model.
- Ideal types are not ideals or images of what the world ought to look like.
- Weber did argue, however, that the values of one's society often help to decide what a scholar will study.
- He contended that, while values play this very important role in the research process, they must be kept out of the collection and interpretation of data.

#### **Class, Status and Power**

- ❖ Weber developed a multidimensional theory of stratification that combined class, status and party.
  - **Class** is determined by one's economic or market situation (i.e., life chances), and it is not a community but rather a possible basis for communal action.
  - **Status** is a matter of honour, prestige, and one's style of life.
  - **Parties**, according to Weber, are organized structures that exist for the purposes of gaining domination in some sphere of social life e.g. political parties.
- Class, status, and party may be related in many ways in a given empirical case, which provides the sociologist with a very sophisticated set of conceptual tools for the examination of stratification and power.

#### **Types of Authority**

Weber made a profound contribution to the study of obedience with his ideal types of legitimate domination or authority.

1. **Rational-legal authority** rests on rules and law.
  - Often associated with bureaucracy.
2. **Traditional authority** rests on belief in established practices and traditions.
  - This authority is legitimate because it is exercised the way it has always been exercised.
  - Associated with gerontocracy, patriarchalism, patrimonialism, and feudalism.
3. **Charismatic authority** rests on the belief in the extra ordinary powers or qualities of a leader.
  - Associated with a charismatic form of organization. E.g. Makandiwa and Magaya
  - The dilemma of charismatic authority, however, consists of the difficulty of maintaining charisma when the charismatic leader dies.

#### **BUREAUCRACY**

According to Weber, bureaucracy is the most efficient form of organisation. The organisation has a well-defined line of authority. It has clear rules and regulations which are strictly followed. On his ideal types Weber came up with an ideal type of bureaucratic arrangement.

#### **Rationality**

- ❖ Weber also argued that rationalization is a long-term historical process that has transformed the modern world.
  - He was most concerned with processes of formal and substantive rationalization, especially as driven by capitalism and bureaucracy.
  - Weber argued that rationalization has occurred in many spheres, including the economy, law, religion, politics, the city, and art.

- Weber's arguments regarding rationalization are demonstrated in his studies of religion and capitalism. His studies inquire into the ways in which religious ideas, the spirit of capitalism, and capitalism as an economic system, are interrelated.
- According to Weber, Calvinism as a rational, methodical system of religious beliefs and practices was an important factor in the emergence of modern capitalism in the Western world.
- The economic ethics of other religions, such as Hinduism and Confucianism, inhibited the emergence of modern capitalism in India and China.
- Once modern capitalism emerged in the Western world, however, it spread the effects of rationalization worldwide.

### **Talcott Parsons (1902-1979)**

- Parsons and the functionalist approach to sociology occupy an intermediate position between classical and contemporary sociology.
- Functionalist theory and the sociology of Talcott Parsons must be studied in order to understand the development of sociological thought.
- In addition, some of the ideas of Parsons have proved to be useful to the study of the contemporary social world.

### **Social Order.**

- Much like Durkheim, Parsons was concerned with the problem of social order.
  - How order could be maintained if individuals were really separate entities pursuing their self-interest.
  - How could there be anything but disorder?
  - In practice, people do cooperate, and there is a degree of social integration.
- For Parsons this comes from the values of society and of social actors - the basis of social action can be termed voluntarism.
- People act on the basis of their values; their actions are oriented and constrained/forced by the values and norms of people around them; and these norms give the basis of social order
- The importance of values can be seen by looking at how social actors view **ends** and **means** within the context of values e.g. working hard is a legitimate way for one to get money while stealing is not.

### **Ends**

- The wants and desires of people are socially derived.
- The goals that people pursue are based on shared values and norms, and these are "adopted in the motivational systems of individuals"

### **Means**

- The manner in which particular ends are pursued is usually not the technically most efficient manner rather are socially and morally regulated, with views of right and wrong, proper and improper, and appropriate and not.
- In the view of the structural functionalists, "without the normative regulation of means, society would be afflicted by chaos, anomie, and apathy ... social disorder" (Ritzier, p. 239).
- Note also that these are carried out within a system of controls, or there are various conditions placed on individual action.

## Function.

- The shared values and norms, the institution of the family, and the generally agreed upon means for accomplishing ends were viewed by Parsons as being functional for the operation of society as a system.
- Critics argue that this is not really social analysis but description and justification, because it makes the institutions appear to be necessary and the only ones that could exist.
- As a result, there appears to be strong conservative and consensus assumptions built into this approach.
- While the degree of consensus can be overestimated, people make attempts to get along with each other,
  - They do not have random sets of ends, and
  - There is a range of appropriate means in any given society.
  - There is a degree of social integration in society, and it comes not only from powerful groups with interests imposing their wills against the interests of the mass of the population.
  - Wealth and power determine some aspects of societal structure, but at both the micro and macro level there are many commonly shared norms and values that contribute to social stability and social integration.

## **Theory**

- The sociology of Parsons was primarily theoretical, with little empirical content.
- Parsons wrote several long theoretical treatises, integrating concepts and theories from the classical sociologists with his own ideas and interpretation.
- Unlike Marx, Weber, or Durkheim, Parsons does not lay out a methodology for the study of sociology or the social sciences.
- Instead, he attempted to build large theoretical frameworks which dealt with concepts from all the social sciences.

## **William Isaac Thomas (13 August 1863 - 5 December 1947)**

- Was an American sociologist.
- W.I. Thomas developed innovative work on the sociology of migration.
- Thomas formulated a fundamental principle of sociology, known as the Thomas theorem. "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences".
- 1907 saw the publication of Thomas's first major work, *Sex and Society*.
- Despite a biological bias that would nowadays be considered sexist by many the book was progressive for its time.
  - Anthropologists ... regard women as intermediate between the child and the man
- In "Sex and Society", Thomas speculated that women's intellect might actually be superior to men's "due to their superior cunning" and "superior endurance".
- Thomas employed methods of field observation that ethnographers had developed previously to study non-literate societies.
- Thomas spent several years collecting oral and written reports from Chicago's Polish community as well as from Poles in their native land.
- Thomas utilized newspaper reports, archives of organizations, personal letters, and diaries, which he acquired by placing advertisements in Chicago's Polish-language press, offering, for example, 10 or 20 cents for each mailed letter collected from Poland.
- Further, Thomas introduced the important concept of the 'definition of the situation', which was later referred to as the Thomas theorem
  - It is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct — if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.
  - If people view somebody as great, then he is.

- An example of this major contribution is if James is convinced that George hates him then he will act towards George in a way that will sour their relationship, regardless if George's hatred is real or imagined.
- What really counts is the way the actor defines the meaning of the symbol, not what the symbol may mean to the sociologist investigating the actor's actions.

- Along with the ideas of George Herbert Mead, Thomas's concept of the "definition of the situation" later proved to be an important part of the rebellion of symbolic interactionism against structural functionalism.
- ❖ Thomas died on 5 December 1947.

### GEORGE HERBERT MEAD (1863-1931) (Symbolic interactionism)

- Mead's work was greatly influenced by Charles Horton Cooley and John Dewey whom he met when he got a post at the University of Michigan.

#### Mead's Theory of "The Self":

- Developed a theory of the social self, which is based on the central argument that the self is a social nascent/budding.
- The social beginning of the self- entails that individual selves are produced by social interaction.
- The self is not initially there at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity.
  - This experience is learnt through socialization which is the way children come to know and learn different roles in life.
  - As children play they continually try to re-enact what they see in everyday life. E.g. they can take roles of the teacher, police officer, mother, father etc. children tend to take the role of the **significant other**, (*people we tend to model our behaviour towards or whose behaviour we want to avoid*).
  - These roles can be swiftly shifted in child play showing their awareness of the role sets.
  - Play stage is very important in a person's development of social behaviour.
- George Herbert Mead is also well-known for his concept of the **"I"** and the **"me."**
- According to Mead:
  - The **"I"** is the immediate response of the individual to others.
    - ✚ It is creative and unpredictable,
    - ✚ it is revolutionary and therefore a major source of change and innovation in society
  - The **"Me"** is an adoption of the **generalised other**; a combination of society's members. It represents the voice of society and is taken in by individuals as conscience.
    - ✚ The **"Me"** is characterised by conformity and thus society dominates the individual through the **"Me"**.
    - ✚ For Mead individuals carry the generalised other within them and it is this that allows them, through self-criticism to control; themselves.

## SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY.

Three theoretical perspectives guide sociological thinking on social problems.

- These perspectives look at the same social problems, but in different ways.
- Their views taken together offer a better understanding of social problems than any of the views can offer alone.
- This will guide the development of effective social policy measures
- Below is a snapshot of the theories and how each approaches problem solutions: -

Theoretical perspective	Major assumptions	Views of social problems
Functionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stability is necessary for a strong society.</li> <li>• Socialization and social integration help maintain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social problems weaken a society's stability but do not reflect major faults in how the society is</li> </ul>



Theoretical perspective	Major assumptions	Views of social problems
	social stability. • Social institutions perform important functions to help ensure social stability. • Social change is slow and desirable that way. • Rapid social change threatens social order.	organized. • Solutions to social problems should be gradual social reform rather than sudden but far-reaching. • Social problems often also serve important functions for society.
Conflict theory	• Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on social class, race, gender, and other factors. • Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality and to create an egalitarian society.	• Social problems arise from essential faults in the structure of a society and both reflect and reinforce inequalities based on social class, race, gender, and other dimensions. • Successful solutions to social problems must involve far-reaching change in the structure of society.
Symbolic interactionism	• People do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them but they construct them. • Individuals negotiate their definitions of the situations and socially construct the reality of these situations. • Symbols such as words and gestures help to reach a shared understanding of social interaction.	• Social problems arise from the interaction of individuals. • People who engage in socially problematic behaviours often learn these behaviours from other people. • Individuals also learn their perceptions of social problems from other people.

### **Social problems**

- Poverty
- Social exclusion

### **Social policy initiatives**

- Free education
- Adult education
- Beam
- Health provision
- Food provision

## **RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCE SUBJECTS**

- Sociology is wide and broad in scope.
- It is related and interlinked with many other social sciences.
- Sociology is the science of society and many kinds of things happen.
- Cooperation between social sciences happen in the following ways: -

### **History Science**

- Sociology is one of the most genuine fruits of history to which it is intimately connected.
- History being the reconstruction of man's past is a story of the experience of mankind and the record of human past.
- Sociology is the science of society; on the other hand, it is interested in the present.
  - Tries to analyse human interactions and interrelations with all their complexity and diversity.
  - It also tries to view historical developments of societies.
  - History with its record of various social events of the past offers data facts to sociologists who are interested in the present.

- According to G.E Howard, History is past sociology and sociology is present history.

### **Anthropology**

- Concerns individual cultures in a society, rather than the society as a whole.
- Traditionally, anthropology focuses on what might be termed "primitive" cultures, such as the Yanomamo people of the South American jungle,
- Anthropologists place special emphasis on language, kinship patterns, and cultural artefacts.
- Sociology borrows heavily from anthropology; like on cultural patterns and configurations.
- Anthropology is closely related to sociology that in many cases it is indistinguishable.

### **Political science**

- Sociology is the younger science while political science is the older science.
- Concerns the governments of various societies.
- It considers what kind of government a society has, how it formed, and how individuals attain positions of power within a particular government.
- Political science also concerns the relation of people in a society to whatever form of government they have.
- We do not have any well-defined boundaries marking political science off from sociology.

### **Psychology**

- Sociology and psychology are contributory sciences.
- Psychology has been defined as the study of human behaviour.
- It takes the individual out of his or her social circumstances and examines the mental processes that occur within that person.
- Psychologists study the human brain and how it functions,
- Considers issues such as memory, dreams, learning, and perception.
- Social psychology places the individual's behaviour in the social context. i.e. in society
- It helps a great deal in facing several social problems.
- It is the study of the way in which the individual becomes members of and their functions in social groups.
- Sociology analyses social processes but social psychology analyses mental processes of man.

### **Economics**

- Sociology and economics as social sciences have very close relations.
- Sociologists have contributed to the study of different aspects of economic organisation.
- Focuses on the production and distribution of society's goods and services.
- Economists study why a society chooses to produce what it does.
- Economists are interested in how money is exchanged.
- How people interact and cooperate to produce goods.
- Sociology studies all kinds of social relationships but economics deals with only social economic relationships.

### **Is Sociology a Science?: Positivist, interpretive and post- modernist perspectives**

There exists a great controversy about the exact nature of Sociology. The root question is, whether sociology is a science? Sociologists get divided among themselves into two opposite groups. For one group of sociologists, sociology is a science because it adopts and applies the methods of natural sciences for social investigation. Founding fathers of sociology Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and others subscribe to this view. On the contrary, the other camp holds a different viewpoint that sociology is not a science. German scholar Max

Weber does not entirely accept the mechanistic viewpoint of science as advocated by Comte. However, sociology is a behavioral science which tries to explore and explain social reality as objectively as possible.

An examination of what constitutes a science makes it easy to answer this question.

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**MEANING OF SCIENCE:** Science is a body of systematic knowledge. Science is based on reason and evidences. A science is "a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws." Science collects facts and links them together in their casual sequence to draw valid inferences. Science adopts scientific method.

### **Scientific Method**

- Others can repeat the method.
- Others can replicate/reproduce the experiment and so, it gives the method a claim to power.

Scientific knowledge is acquired through **observation, experimentation, generalization etc.** Science has the following characteristics such as **objectivity, observation, accurate prediction, experimentation, accurate measurement, generalization and cause-effect relationships.**

### **Science must be:-**

**Objective:** avoids any bias or value judgement

### **Empirical:**

- based on practical investigations - empirical evidence
- Know through the senses - tested physically
- Rely on accurate gathering of information to get reliable measurable data.

### **Testable:**

- have testable concepts
- Can be verified or refuted: - Falsification is the most important characteristic as far as Karl Popper is concerned.
- Inductive as used by Durkheim; formulating a theory and using data to test the theory
- Sociology cannot use laboratory experiments to test theories, it cannot isolate the variables in a situation but this is true of cosmology, meteorology, volcanologist and animal behaviour which are also open systems. This does not stop theories being tested by observation.
- Sociologists claim that comparative methods allow testing of a result (triangulation)

### **Theoretical:**

- be able to make generalisations based on the research conducted to establish universal laws
- Sociology can predict how groups of people will react.
- The proposal of patterns is something that can be tested.

### **Cumulative**

- Both the evolution of theories and collection of data is cumulative in sociology
- Theories change and become more complicated over time.
- Longitudinal studies gather large amounts of facts.

**Sociology is a Science:** According to Comte and Durkheim, "Sociology is a science because it adopts and applies the scientific method. Sociology does make use of scientific methods in the study of its subject matter. Hence Sociology is a science. It is a science because of the following reasons.

**Sociology pursues scientific method:** Sociology studies social reality with the application of scientific method. It believes that human action can be subject to scientific investigation like natural phenomenon.

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**Investigation is possible:**

- Sociology conducts many experiments indirectly and employs scientific methods such as scales of socio meter, schedules, questionnaire, interview and Case History etc.
- In these methods quantitative measures are used to measure social phenomenon.
- Sociologists use statistical methods in their analyses. For example, if we want to know about families with low incomes have more deaths, we collect data.
- The difficulty lies in getting the data for process are very costly.

**2) Experimentation and Observation is possible:**

- Sociology uses observation as a tool: Sociologist studies social world as a social observer. The whole world is the laboratory of sociology. The sociologist applies fieldwork method in the understanding and interpretation of the human world.
- It is not possible to put human beings into a laboratory and observe them. Although there is no laboratory for human observation the whole social world is its laboratory.
- In laboratory, experiments are conducted to measure the relationship between two variables, keeping other factors constant. In sociology, we do the same, but not in a formal laboratory. We do it through statistics.
- Laboratory experiments are not the only criteria for science. Had it been so then Astronomy would not have been qualified to be science and Newton and Archimedes did not invent their laws inside a laboratory.
- The obstacles for a sociologist is not subject matter itself but from the limitations placed on him by his own society.

**3) Comparison is possible:**

- Sociologists use comparisons between groups, communities and societies.
- Comparative method is one of the important methods in scientific investigation.

**4) Generalisation is possible:**

- The view that generalisation is not possible in sociology as in natural sciences is not true. Like natural sciences, sociology draws generalizations based fieldwork which is universally applicable.
- Sociologists seek universal generalisations. For example, incest taboo (prohibition of sex relationship among blood relatives a universal general truth).
- Sociology makes laws and attempts to predict. It tries to discover laws that are generally applicable in all the societies, irrespective of actual differences. A regulation of marriage in certain manner to prevent incest is one such example.

**5) Accurate measurement is possible:**

- Sociology makes accurate measurement: Sociology, like natural sciences also accurately measures social phenomena or relationships. By using statistical method, socio-metric scale, scales of measurement sociology effectively and accurately measures social relationships. Hence Sociology is a science.

**6) Prediction is possible:**

- Like natural sciences, sociology does frame laws and attempts to predict more accurately. On the basis of cause-effect relationship, sociology can accurately predict about future. If there will be dowry in society then it will lead to suicide, poverty. Cuvier opines that this predictive value of sociology is improved day by day. As Sociology matures day by day, it predicts more accurately.

**7) Objectivity is possible:**

- Like natural sciences, Sociology engages itself in objective analysis. Sociological insights are based on facts emerging from field investigation.
- No value judgment is personal. The statement that dowry is a social evil is a scientific judgment.

- Social surveys and careful studies confirm that Social values are based on careful observation and analysis of social facts. They are product of scientific research as social issues.

#### 8) Probability of cause and effect relationship:

- Sociology tries to analyse cause and effect relationship. In its study of family, it has traced the relationship
  - between family disorganisation and divorce,
  - between urbanisation and family disorganisation,
  - family disorganisation as one of the causes of divorce.
- Thus sociology traces cause and effect relationship in social organisation.
- It tries to find out the "how" and "why" of social relationships and social processes.

#### CONCLUSION

- ✳ The scientific nature of sociology is a hot issue which has acquired greater dimensions. From the above it follows that sociology is a science in its own right.
- ✳ Science is after all a method of discovery through observation and experimentation. The result of these observations and experiments are arranged and organised in the fields of knowledge.
- ✳ The term science in other words is the classification of facts and recognition of their sequences.
- ✳ Science is a process which tries to get at the facts and tries to understand them.
- ✳ Science helps us to face facts.
- ✳ It is mostly concerned with a mass of knowledge regarding a particular subject acquired by systematic observation, experience and study analysed and classified into unified whole.
- It is approach rather than the content that is the real test of science.
- ✳ According to Lundeborg, "Science is a procedure for discovering conditions under which events occur".
- ✳ According to Max Weber, "Sociology is a science which attempts at interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects".
- Sociology studies its subjects matter scientifically.
- ✳ It tries to classify types and forms of social relationship, of institutions and associations.
- ✳ It tries to determine the relation between different parts and factors of social life.
- ✳ It tries to deduce general laws from a systematic study.
- Sociological principles are then applied to the solution of social problems.
- ✳ Sociology is thus as much a social science like psychology, Economics, political science and other social sciences concerning man.

#### Positivist Sociologists

- Believe that science can explain the universe.
- They use hypo-deductive reasoning to test their beliefs
  - This is when scientists present a theory and invite others to prove them wrong
- It is based on the concept that nothing can be proven to be 100% true but theories can be proven false.
- It is reasoned that if a theory cannot be proven wrong it has an increased likelihood of being correct/true (but we will never be 100% sure)
- According to positivists, ***for theories to be scientific they must be testable /falsifiable.***
- Positivists believe for a theory to be valid it must be backed by a scientific approach because this has hard evidence.
- Positivists see the world as being full of concrete testable realities and use quantitative methods to support their theories.
- But even amongst positivists there is no agreement as to whether a theoretical subject such as sociology should be considered to be truly scientific

## Interpretivists

- Disagree with the positivists' scientific claims.
- They see the world as a largely socially constructed place.
- Reality only exists because of agreed shared concepts. Knowledge itself is whatever we agree it to be.

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- ▶ For example, most people would recognize a chair as something useful to sit on but if you took it to a very aggressive tribe who had been isolated from the rest of the world they may view it as a shield with spikes on!!!

- When we are trying to understand/interpret a situation **context** is a very important aspect.
- Interpretivists don't think that scientific methodology is useful to the study of human interactions or sociology in general
- They see it as invalid because it often removes the context or interferes in some way with the subject matter
- Interpretivists use qualitative research techniques such as ethnographic techniques, observations and unstructured interviews.

## Science and the modern world: the postmodernist criticism

- By claiming a monopoly on explanation, scientists have replaced priests as the sources of truth however there are many questions that are asked that science fails to answer.
  - What is life for?
  - What is justice?
  - Are we responsible for other people?
- By posing as having an answer for everything science is making life cheap.
- ❖ People like Schultz, Billing and Bauman suggest that Sociology can't and shouldn't be a science.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY

- These are perspectives (view points) to social life.
- A theory attempts to explain, describe and predict social events.
- It is like lenses that are used to view social occurrences
- There are three major theoretical perspectives in sociology.
  - The interactionist,
  - functionalist and
  - Conflict perspective.
  - The fourth is the multi-dimensional approach/view of society.
- These theoretical perspectives are like lenses or glasses used to analyse social matters.
- In life people differ, the ways they see things but these different views all explain social reality. (Have you ever considered how soccer fans have different views of the same player in single match?) This is the same with theoretical perspectives explaining social life.
- Theoretical perspectives take basic assumption: -

### **Examples of these basic assumptions:**

- Society is a unified whole that seeks stability. (functionalism)
- Society is composed of groups competing for scarce resources. (conflict)
- Social life can be measured through observing daily interactions. (Interactionist)

- Sociology should be used to enact social change.
- Sociology should be value free

## **FUNCTIONALISM (CONSENSUS)**

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- Macro-level focus. (Give importance to social structures).
  - Prominent in the works of Augustine Comte, Emile Durkheim, Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons.
  - Characterised by **value consensus, stability, order, and pattern maintenance**.
  - Society is a **stable** arrangement of parts that fit together: -
    - Based on the assumption that society is a stable **orderly** system characterised by **societal consensus**; it is this **value consensus** that gives order and stability because members of society will be in agreement on what is wrong and right.
    - Society is glued together by shared values Talcott Parsons, 1902-1979. (value consensus)
    - Functionalists view society as a system i.e. a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. Each part of society performs functions contributing to the overall functioning of society as a whole.
    - The concept of function refers to the contribution of the part to the whole.
  - Social structures or institutions persist because they play a major part in helping society to survive (**they are functional**).
    - Parts of the society are functional in so far as they maintain the system and contribute to its survival.
    - The contribution of each part to the whole makes it survive i.e. religion survives because it serves important functions for the survival of society like social integration.
  - These institutions include the family, education, judicial, religion etc.
- ❖ The basic unit of analysis for functionalist is society and its parts are understood in terms of the relationship to the whole e.g. the family and religion are understood in reference to the contribution that they make in the system as a whole.
- The function of family is to ensure the continuity of society by reproducing and socializing new members.
  - Religion is to integrate individual in the social system by reinforcing common values.
  - Talcott Parsons emphasised that societies must make provisions for meeting social needs in order to survive
  - E.g. Division of labour between husband and wife is essential for family stability and order.
  - Robert Merton (another functionalist) talked of the manifest and latent functions.
    - Manifest - intended functions
    - Latent - unintended - hidden - unacknowledged
  - A good example is on prostitution.
    - ✚ A manifest function of prostitution is to get money by participation.
    - ✚ Latent functions - save marriages.
  - Functionalists also employ the concept of dysfunction to refer to the effects of undesirable consequences of any social institution which detracts from the maintenance of society. However, functionalist concentrated on functions rather than dysfunctions this has led critics to argue that functionalism has a built in conservative bias which supports the status quo.
  - Functionalists also liken society to a human body: - This comparison is referred to as the **organic analogy**. They believe that social institutions function in combination with one another and for the benefit of society as a whole just as the various parts of the human body function in relation to the whole body;
    - They argue that just as an organism has basic needs which must be satisfied if it is to survive, so society has basic needs which have to be met if it is to continue existing.
    - These basic needs are known as **functional pre-requisites** of society.
    - Functionalism stresses cooperation and stability
    - Change is seen to take place through adaptation and integration: -
      - **Adaptation:** -when an institution readjusts to meet new needs a
      - **Integration:** - occurs when society adopts new element and makes it part of itself.
    - To the functionalist's change is evolutionary and not revolutionary.



- The basis of order in society is value consensus
- Functionalist in society stress the importance of teaching values in maintaining order. The values are transmitted by institutions such as: -
  - the family
  - the church
  - the school
  - the work place
- There is no room for the individual to control his or her own life let alone change society.
- Disorder such as civil wars are regarded as abnormal states and are compared to sicknesses in a living organism.

#### **An overview of functionalism would therefore reflect that:-**

- Stability is necessary for a strong society.
- Socialization and social integration help maintain social stability.
- Social institutions perform important functions to help ensure social stability.
- Social change is slow and desirable that way.
- Rapid social change threatens social order.

#### **Criticism of the functionalist perspective**

- There is an over emphasis of consensus in society.
- Although some values overlap no values are common to all members of society.
- Stability may be a result of manipulation or false consensus as in the case of force by the police and army.
- Consensus may yield negative results; when people agree on destructive activity it brings disorder rather than the desired order.
- As people compete for scarce resources there is conflict instead of consensus.
- Likening organisms and society may not be proper as the organism is biological and has a natural life process and society is not.
- According to Parsons the needs of society are not the needs of society but the needs of those in power within society.

- **INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE (INTERACTIONISM)** :- Micro-level analysis of society. (Gives importance to the individual.)
- Prominent in the works of George Herbert Mead and Charles H. Cooley.
- People interact through shared symbols (physical ones and intangible ones like body language) which gives meaning in social interactions•
- All reality is based on shared subjective agreement. (Herbert Blumer, 1900-1987)
  - Explains human behaviour by examining the way that people interpret the actions of others and act in terms of meaning.
  - Social communication is therefore important from an interactionist point of view.
  - Interactionist believe that people attach meanings to everyday life solutions and these means differ from are person to another as a result they believe that there is no one single truth in life.
  - E.g. A naked person in the dark kneeling in front of a lit candle may be viewed differently by different people.
  - ❖ Depending on religions background one can argue that the person is performing a ritual or they could be praying.
  - ❖ These views could be true (both) and this is how interactionist explains social life according to meanings.
  - The interactionist perspective is based on the assumption that society is the sum of interaction of the individuals and groups.
  - George Herbert Mead a founder of this perspective emphasized that a key feature that distinguish humans from other animals is the ability to communicate in symbols (language is a symbol) hence symbolic interactionism.

- The interactionist perspective studies how social structures are created in the course of human interaction generating questions about:
  - How people behave in groups.
  - How social roles are learned.
  - How society is constructed through interactions.

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### **Criticism of the Interactionist perspective**

- This perspective however fails to explain the way society shapes human interaction, because human interaction takes place in social and cultural context.
- Assumes interaction takes place in a vacuum; fails to consider the wider structural factors that create the context in which the interaction takes place.
- Fails to explain the origins of meanings that people attach upon actions.
- It fails to explain the source of norms and why people follow guidelines when they have freedom.
- Ignores the idea of power and class domination. Liberty freedom and individuality are a myth.

### **Real World Application:**

#### **Symbolic Interactionism and Marriage**

- Symbolic interactionists would suggest that couples negotiate their particular roles. Through verbal and non-verbal interactions,
- they can negotiate things like:
  - If and how many children, they will have
  - How domestic chores should be split
  - How will they divide time for themselves from time with other couples and friends?

#### **An overview of symbolic interactionism would show that:-**

- People do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them but they construct them.
- Individuals negotiate their definitions of the situations and socially construct the reality of these situations.
- Symbols such as words and gestures help to reach a shared understanding of social interaction.

### **CONFLICT THEORY:-** Macro-level focus. (Gives dominance to social structures)

- A theory associated with the German economist/historian Karl Marx and may be called Marxist perspective.
- According to Karl Marx:
  - Humans depend on each other for survival, protection, companionship and affection.
  - Individuals differ in temperament, likes and dislikes, goal and desires.
  - Change in society is brought by competing interests of various social classes resulting in conflict.
  - Conflict in society emanates from unequal access to economic resources.
  - Conflict is normal; stability and order is not. (Karl Marx, 1818-1883)
- Max Weber adds that power and prestige also result in conflict.
- Conflict theorists, assert that groups in society are engaged in a continuous struggle for scarce resources. Karl Marx believed that economic conditions were important in producing inequality and conflict in society.
- Marx believed that society is constructed from classes: - it is peoples' relationship to the means of production that determine which class they belong.
- According to Marx those who own the means of production are the powerful in society and these are the bourgeoisie or the capitalist also called the ruling class, this is the dominant class in society. The subordinate class is the working class or the proletariat who own nothing but their labour in order to survive.

**Means of production:** - basis for survival e.g. land for Agricultural societies, industry for industrial societies/capitalist system.

**Mode of production:** -tools and machinery.

- Marx believes that in a capitalist society the capitalist is the ruling class while the working class is the subordinate class.
- In Marx's view society operates mainly through class conflicts; each class pursues its own interests and this brings about conflict with other classes. "The history of all hitherto in societies is the history of class struggle" Karl (Marx).
- In a capitalist society the capitalist and the working class are fundamentally opposed.
- Marx believed this will be okay as a result of class conflict.
- Max Weber believed that Karl Marx over emphasized the importance of class groupings.
- He recognised the importance of class groupings but considered political parties and status groups to be powerful forces in society that do not necessarily derive their power on classes.
- Today there is a new group of theorist the **neo- Marxist** who follow the Marxist perspective.

**Conflict theory therefore reflects the following major assumptions:-**

- Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on socio-economic factors such as social class, level of income, race, ethnicity, gender, identity and religion
- Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality and to create an egalitarian society.

**Criticism of the conflict perspective**

- Conflict does not only occur between classes but even within classes, basing on sex, race, ethnicity and religion.
  - Marx's concept of economic determinism places a lot of stress on economy as determining all social life, giving power to economic structure while ignoring individual creativity and freedom.
  - Marx ignores women and their positions in society, Feminists argue that under capitalism women suffer more than men as they are exploited by men.
- ❖ Ralf Dahrendorf (1959) sees the Marxist idea of history as basically a record of class conflict as an oversimplification.
- ❖ Dahrendorf assets that in Morden industrial societies, conflict emanates from authority relationships rather than economic interests.

**Multidimensional view of society**

- This perspective believes that there is no single unifying set of theories explaining how societies are formed and why they change.
- Social life involves a lot of issues thus it is doubtful whether a single set of theories will ever explain everything.

# TOPIC 2: SOCIALISATION:

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- Theories of socialisation
- The process of socialisation
- Nature and nurture debate
- The nature of people without socialisation

## THE PROCESS OF SOCIALISATION

The process of learning roles and the norms and values appropriate to members of society from those around them is called **socialization**".

### ❖ Socialization

- Because people are born into an existing society they need to learn (be **socialized**) into the way of the people (culture) of the people thus learning to be human
- Socialization is the process starting from birth ending at death.
  - It is a process whereby humans become self-aware, knowledgeable and skilled in the ways of the culture into which they are born.
  - Psychologists believe that a child mind is born empty and as a result everything that a person becomes is learnt through associating with others; that is the socialization process.
- Socialization is the development of the social self; it is the way in which we acquire the social and cultural knowledge of our society. Human personality is developed and shaped through socialization.
- Society, through socialization inculcates in us what makes us feel guilty, anxious or happy.
- The individual being socialized acquires a social self, an awareness of other persons and their expectations and a social personality that reflects/mirrors socially relevant patterns of behaviour, traits and values.
- Socialization therefore makes possible the transmission of culture from one generation to the next and in this way culture is reproduced in the next generation
- It is indeed a lifelong process as we learn new rules in new groups and new situations ending only when one dies.

**Sociologists note that socialization occurs on three levels.**

- i. Primary socialization:- First socialization that takes place in a child's life; refers to the basic and fundamental aspects of interacting that help an individual develop self-awareness. Here socialization occurs most often through infancy and childhood and is influenced most strongly by the family. In this respect the family is the agent of primary socialization.

The child learns the following in the home:

- ✚ To walk
- ✚ To talk
- ✚ To use various tools such as forks and knives.
- ✚ To know the difference between right and wrong
- ✚ How to relate properly with others.
- ✚ Gender roles: what it is to be masculine or feminine. (Through dress and toys in early life and later through duties assigned.)
- Once the child learns to speak its through language that the child acquires the rest of the culture.
- Many things learnt through primary socialization stay with us for life.
  - Primary socialization is important to us as it helps us we can apply what we learn to new and different situations. For example, we don't just learn how to relate with adults but to distinguish between different

types of adults on the basis of their status and relationship to us (Familiar and unfamiliar adults mean differently to the child).

- Children tend to be quiet and shy to strangers; this is even seen in teen agers when they meet strangers: it is because they are not sure of how to behave to these strangers.

ii. Secondary socialization occurs in later childhood through adolescence. As the social sphere widens, social influence moves beyond the family and extends to peer groups and other nonfamily forces.

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- This socialization is done by agents such as:

- School
- Church
- Peer group
- Mass media
- Work place

- With secondary socialization individuals start to learn; the nature of the social world beyond primary contacts. There an unemotional relationship outside the family and other primary agents of socialization.

- Talcott Parsons claimed that one of the main purposes or functions of secondary socialization is to: ***"liberate the individual from a dependence upon the primary attachments and relationships formed within the family group."***

✚ By this Parsons meant that the majority of people we meet in modern society are strangers to us; we therefore have to deal them in terms of what they can do for us and what we can do for them in particular situations.

✚ In our primary social attachments there is love, trust, affection and so forth, this cannot apply in our secondary social attachments.

iii. Finally, adult socialization occurs as the individual takes on adult roles such as spouse, employee, or parent, adapting to the complexity of changing roles that occurs throughout the adult years.

- Primary and secondary socialization should reinforce each other but sometimes this is not the case for example when we talk of peer pressure; what is learn in the home differs from what the peers are giving the new member of society.

### The theoretical dilemma

- Human beings have the ability to think about and reflect upon the nature of social world and their position in that world.
- This ability allows people to develop values and norms that characterise the culture of society.
- The fact that we are able to do this means that the cultural values and norms that we create reflect back upon us.
  - We are forced to recognise their existence and this, in turn, shapes the way we think and act through the general socialization process in society.

This therefore creates a theoretical dilemma for all social science

- Our consciousness makes us able to create societies and shape them in any way we choose thus **people create society**.
- On the other hand, the societies we create take on a life of their own that that is separate from each individual. Society thus becomes a force we experience influencing our choice of behaviour.
  - If we have to be socialized into becoming a recognisable human being and this socialization process reflects the values and norms of cultures and subcultures, effectively society is creating us and not us creating society.

1. On one extreme we have Structuralists sociologist who argue that we are products of society: - **society shapes people in its own image**.

- However, people do have individual levels of consciousness, creativity, and understanding.

2. At the other extreme end are the Interactionist sociologists who emphasize the creative aspects of human individuality: - **people shape society in their own image**.

- However, for all our supposed individuality we demonstrate very clear and broadly patterns of behaviour that can only have been imposed on us by the social world.

✚ These are the two theoretical paradigms that show the relationship between the individual and society.

# THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF

## NATURE AND NURTURE DEBATE

**Nurture/Nature debate:** - this debate about whether what we come to be; our personality, achievement, way of interacting with others and other aspects of our behaviour is influenced by our genetic make-up (Nature) or by the social environment in which we are brought up (Nurture).

A story is told about triplets who were brought up by three different families only to meet for the first time at college. Many people who knew them as brothers at college agreed that they resembled each other not only physically but also with their mannerisms, likes and dislikes, sense of humour and many more.

- The similarity of physical appearance, personality and mannerisms seems to offer evidence such traits may be genetic components (nature side of the debate); which attributes individual characteristics largely to biological factors.
- In the case of the triplets, because each child was raised in a comfortable home with caring parents they became good humoured (the nurture side of the debate).
- Sociologists argue that despite the role played by biological factors in shaping human behaviour the social environment plays a major part.
- The discovery of untamed or feral children showed that children raised in extreme isolation revealed lack of socialization.

### **Human Development: Nature and Nurture**

- Charles Darwin (1874) demonstrated that much of human behaviour is rooted in our evolutionary history, human development has thus often approached behaviour in terms of whether biology (nature) or society (nurture) is more important to whom we become.
- Recent research however suggests that this approach is too simplistic. Darwin's view of human behaviour has often been misinterpreted as suggesting that humans are solely a product of drives of instinct.
- While Darwin acknowledged that human behaviour had based on biological processes, he also recognized that human beings possessed a unique trait—culture which is an important part of understanding how human beings develop and grow.
- Early misinterpretations of Darwin's theory were instrumental in justifying prejudices and discrimination against certain groups of people whose behaviours were viewed as both primitive and instinctual.
- Variances in cultures were misattributed to differences in intelligence and understanding rather than to differences in the ways in which cultures can be constructed.
- In contrast to the biological view of human behaviour, according to psychologist Watson all behaviour is learned.
- Watson denied that human beings have any instincts at all but rather believed we exist as empty vessels to be filled by social learning. Watson believed that people vary only in their cultural patterns and learning.
- Like Watson, influential anthropologists noted that while cultures, all cultures are equally complex.
- Neither of these extreme views is entirely correct. It is clear that nature does place limits on the ways in which humans can construct culture, as the existence of cultural universals reveals.
- Cultural universals are cultural patterns that are part of every known culture. Because these traits are a part of every known culture, it is difficult to make the argument that the traits are the result simply of social learning. Rather, as Darwin suggested, these universals are probably rooted in our evolutionary history.
- At the same time, the considerable differences of cultures throughout the world attest to the strength and generality of human choice in the construction of culture.
- Other evidence for the influence of culture on the development of the individual can be seen in studies of social isolation.

### **Development of the self-Mead's Theory of "The Self":**

- According to Mead, there are three activities through which the self is developed:


- Language,
- Play.
- Game.

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1. **Language** allows individuals to take on the "role of the other" and allows people to respond to his or her own gestures in terms of the symbolized attitudes of others.
2. During **play**, individuals take on the roles of other people and pretend to be those other people in order to express the expectations of significant others.
  - This process of role-playing is important to the generation of self-consciousness and to the general development of the self.
  - Children in their play they take roles of their parents, soldiers, police officers nurses and so on.
  - Children thus take the role of the significant other (People who appear large to our lives) in their play.
  - The significant other is the person whose behaviour we seek to model or avoid.
  - Even though children will be playing the play stage is important in the development of a person's social behaviour
3. In the **game**,
  - The individual is required to internalize the roles of all others who are involved with him or her in the game and must comprehend the rules of the game.
  - A person evaluates his/her behaviour according to the group's ideas of how a role should be performed.
  - The generalised other is therefore a composite of all the roles of all the participants in a game.
  - It represents the voice of society which is internalised as a sense of right and wrong (conscience).
    - Mead's concept of the "generalized other" is also essential to his theory, which he defines as an organized and generalized attitude of a social group.
    - The individual defines his or her own behaviour with reference to the generalized attitude of the social group(s) they occupy.
    - When the individual can view himself/herself from the standpoint of the generalized other, self-consciousness in the full sense of the term is attained. The concept of the generalised other can therefore be used to refer to expectations and standards of the overall society.

### The "I" and the "Me"

The ways we choose to behave are influenced by the social background of that behaviour. Mead argued that our behaviour as individuals is conditioned by two aspects of our self-awareness (the ability to see ourselves as others see us and react accordingly).

- According to Mead, the self has two sides.
  1. **The "me" represents the expectations and attitudes of others (the generalized other).**
    - It is the organized set of attitudes of others that the individual assumes.
    - The individual is dominated by society through the "me".
    - The "me" allows an individual to live comfortably in society.
    - Conformists are dominated by the "me".
    - According to Mead individuals carry society within them and it is this that allows them to control themselves through self-criticism. (*what will people say if they hear I did this and that*)
  2. **The "I" is the response to the "me," or the person's individuality.**
    - The "I" is unpredictable and creative (revolutionary).
    - It is selfish and does not think of what will happen (it challenges society).
    - We are never totally aware of the "I" until we surprise ourselves and others with our actions.
    - We only come to know the "I" after the act has been carried out.
-  The "I" is a major source change and innovation in society as it does not always conform.
- According to Mead, the generalized other (internalized in the "me") is the major instrument of social control for it is the mechanism by which the community controls over the conduct of its individual members.

An example of how the "I" and the "Me" operate.



### **If you accidentally put your hand in a fire;**

1. The "I" aspect of the self is expressed by the way you react to the pain that you feel.
2. The "Me" aspect of the self, however specifically conditions the choice of your response to the pain that you feel.
  - i. Who you are (social factors such as gender, age and so forth).
  - ii. Where you are (at home, in public etc.).
  - iii. Who are you being with (family, friends, people you don't know, alone, etc.).

#### **Thus**

- a. If you are a child your reaction may be to cry.
- b. If you are a young man you may feel crying is not socially acceptable, so you may swear loudly instead.
- c. Swearing loudly may be if you are at home by yourself or with someone who accepts the fact that you swear on occasions. Swearing may not be acceptable if for example you are fixing a stranger's fire as part of your job.
- d. If you had been messing around with friends when you burnt your hand, their reaction may be to laugh and make fun of your pain: laughter would not be an acceptable reaction if it was your child that had burnt their hand.

### **The looking-glass self by Charles Horton Cooley**

- Like Mead Cooley believed the individual is a social product, to Cooley the individual and society are one; neither can be understood without the other
- Cooley saw how the centrality of other people's opinions becomes a dominant aspect of our identity; the centrality of the role of others in defining the self. Individual behaviour is thus shaped by what the individual believes is what the larger society expects from them.
- Cooley believed that individuals developed their sense of who they are through social interaction, and he set out to describe the process by which the self emerges.
- According to Cooley, primary groups exert a lasting influence on us and serve as the foundation for the development of our social selves. Individuals tend to reflect the behaviour of others towards them thus the individual is a mirror image of society.
- In contrast to primary groups, with which we interact because it fulfils a basic need, secondary groups are larger, more impersonal groups that fulfil strictly instrumental needs. That is, we join secondary groups to achieve a specific goal or to accomplish a particular task.
- Examples of secondary groups include schools, clubs, governmental organizations, or work.
- As we interact through primary and secondary groups, we notice that the people in these groups react to our behaviours. If these reactions are negative, we will change our behaviours to meet the expectations of the group. If the reactions are positive, those behaviours are reinforced. Thus, we judge our actions and ourselves by how we think we appear to others. Cooley believes through these processes we actually come to be what we believe other people think we are.
- Cooley (1902) termed this the looking-glass self because this process resembles looking in a mirror. "**We see . . . our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aim . . . and so on, and are variously affected by it.**" (Cooley 1902 182).
- The self is continuously constructed through judgments we make about how others see us. Thus, the self is a product of socialization. Cooley saw the process of socialization as lifelong. We are continually attentive of the behaviour cues of others e.g. when dressing we wonder whether they say we look good or whether we are expressing ourselves well. According to Cooley, without socialization a sense of self will not emerge.
- The concept of the looking-glass self implies that the self emerges through the process of interaction.

## **THEORIES OF SOCIALISATION**

## **Functionalist Perspectives on Socialization**

- The functionalist perspective analyses the social world in terms of the functions that institutions have within the whole social system.

### **What function does socialization have in society?**

- Socialization is the way in which each individual learns about his or her social world.
- Socialization functions as a process by which individuals learn the roles they will play in society, as well as the norms that are appropriate for those roles.
- Socialization functions as a means by which our status in society is constructed and maintained.
- Socialization also functions as a means of cultural transmission. That is, socialization is the process by which we teach others what are appropriate beliefs, values, and behaviours in our society. It is how we pass our culture on to our children.

## **Socialization through the Conflict Perspective**

- The conflict perspective tries to understand the world in terms of competition between groups and individuals for scarce resources.
- The conflict perspective sees socialization as the process by which individuals and groups are taught to compete for resources in society.
- Prejudice and discrimination are taught to individuals as ways for them to justify their position as well as to legitimize differential access to resources.
- In other words, the conflict perspective seeks to understand socialization in terms of how individuals and groups are socialized to compete in society.
- Largely, the conflict perspective sees this competition as socially undesirable and uses this knowledge to develop ways to reduce social conflict and increase social justice.

## **Socialization and Symbolic Interactionism**

- Symbolic interactionism is a perspective that is interested in how social reality is constructed through the use of symbols.
- Since socialization is often transmitted and received through symbols such as language, symbolic interactionism seeks to understand how the process of socialization is transmitted.
- For example, many people see a doctor's white lab coat as a symbol of education, experience, and authority.
- Yet how is this message transmitted?
- Clearly, the white coat is a symbol of a doctor, but how do we learn this?
- Symbolic interactionism seeks to understand how individuals become socialized to understand the workings of our society and how they use this knowledge to be successful in society.

### **According to Parsons**

- Socialisation helps to produce value consensus
- Creation and maintenance of value consensus allows society to meet basic needs; ( functional prerequisites)
- Helps individual to internalise society's values i.e. they become part of the individual's personality.
- Socialisation helps in pattern maintenance ( common culture)
- Socialisation therefore helps achieve the following
  - Provides people with common goals
  - Appropriate behaviour for particular roles e.g. mother, teacher, friend, pastor etc.
  - Teaches social life norms.

## **THE NATURE OF PEOPLE WITHOUT SOCIALISATION**

### **The impact of lack of socialisation**

Socialization is the process whereby infants and children *develop* into social beings. Among other things;

- Children develop a sense of self, memory, language, and intellect.
- They learn from their elders the attitudes, values, and proper social behaviors of the culture into which they were born.
- Becoming socialized benefits the individual by giving him or her tools needed for success in the native culture. Socialization also benefits the society by providing continuity over time and preserving its essential nature from generation to generation; Socialization connects different generations to each other.

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### **Social Isolation in Monkeys**

- Psychologists Harry and Margaret Harlow conducted early studies of social isolation using rhesus monkeys.
- In 1962, the Harlows placed infant monkeys in conditions of varying isolation. What they found was startling.
- The greater the degree of social isolation, the greater was the degree of developmental disturbance.
- Monkeys placed in total isolation for six months showed disturbing and irreversible developmental deficiencies, even when adequate nutrition was provided.
- When these monkeys were brought into a room with other rhesus monkeys, they exhibited extreme passivity in interaction, anxiousness, and fear of other monkeys.
- The Harlows (1964) conducted another experiment in which infant rhesus monkeys were provided with an artificial mother. This artificial mother had a wire body, wooden head, and a feeding tube.
- Monkeys raised by this mother suffered similar developmental deprivations as monkeys raised in isolation.
- Another group of infant monkeys was given an artificial mother made from soft terrycloth. Although these infants did suffer some developmental setbacks, they were able to interact to some degree when placed in a group.
- Furthermore, monkeys raised in social isolation who later become mothers themselves exhibited consistent inability to care for their infants. Most commonly, the new mothers were indifferent to their young, neglecting them to the point of death.
- Based on these experiments, the Harlows concluded that social interaction is a key component to proper development.
- While short-term isolation appears to be reversible to some degree, isolation for longer than about three months appears to lead to permanent developmental damage.

### **Social Isolation in Children**

- The kinds of experiments that the Harlows conducted on monkeys cannot be done on human infants for ethical reasons.
- However, documented cases of children growing up in isolation suggest that the results of the Harlows' experiments would apply to humans as well.
- Despite the tragic nature of these cases, they shed light on the importance of social interaction on the development of the human mind.
- The notion of feral children—that is, children raised in the wild or by animals—is nearly as old as recorded history. For example, Romulus and Remus, legendary founders of the city of Rome, were allegedly raised by wolves.
- However, credible modern cases of feral children do exist, and they shed light on the effects of isolation on the human mind.

#### **1) One such case is the story of Anna.**

- Discovered in 1938 by social workers on the second storey of a farmhouse in rural Pennsylvania,
- Anna lived a life of virtually total isolation from her mentally challenged mother and elderly grandfather.
- The two fed Anna only milk and kept her locked in a storage room until her discovery at age six.
- The emaciated Anna could not speak or walk, and she rejected human contact.
- After extensive socialization over the course of 10 days, Anna was able to interact with others. She began to walk. She found joy in the ability to feed herself and play with toys.

However, it also became clear that her years of social isolation had caused permanent developmental damage.

- By age eight, Anna's development was below that of an average two-year old.
- By age 10, Anna was using simple words.

- Unfortunately, Anna died at age 10 of a blood disease that may have been related to the years of neglect that she had suffered (Davis 1947).

**2) In 1970, another feral child was found in California, Genie.**

- She was 13 and had spent her life strapped to a potty chair in a dark room.
- She was rarely spoken to by her blind mother and mentally unstable father.
- Her only source of stimulation was a raincoat hung on a hook in front of the chair, which Genie could reach out and play with as she sat alone.
- When Genie was found, she had the mental capacity of an average one-year-old child.
- Her brain scans revealed no obvious abnormality so the deficiency is assumed to be the result of isolation.
- Although Genie's physical health improved dramatically, her cognitive improvements were not as spectacular.
- After nearly five years of intensive work, her language skills were still equivalent to a small child's. While Genie has learned to do many things for herself, 13 years of social isolation have meant that she must live in a group home for developmentally disabled adults (Rymer 1993).

☀ **The cases of Anna and Genie illustrate both the power and limitations of socialization.**

- Individuals who lack appropriate early socialization tend to display developmental delays.
- Children who are not socialized properly do not develop properly.
- On the other hand, the failure of attempts at socialization to overcome years of isolation means that there are limits to the plasticity of the human brain.

**3) One other most commonly cited example of feral children is the *Boy of Aveyron* who emerged little more than a "beast" from a forest in France in 1798.**

"Unsocialized" children such as this boy typically: -

- look more animal than human,
- prefer to remain naked (at least at first upon being discovered),
- lack human speech,
- have no sense of personal hygiene,
- fail to recognize themselves in a mirror,
- show little or no reasoning ability, and
- Respond only partially to attempts to help them change from "animal into human."

The phenomenon of feral (literally *wild* or untamed) children sparks much discussion regarding the nature versus nurture debate because research shows that the state of these children seems to suggest the important role that learning plays in normal human development.

Social scientists emphasize that socialization is intimately related to *cognitive, personality, and social development*. They argue that socialization primarily occurs during infancy and childhood, although they acknowledge that humans continue to grow and adapt throughout the lifespan.

Note

- The cases of feral children (*who lacked socialisation*) reveal the importance of primary socialization in opening the gates for the subsequent levels of socialization.
- ***Individuals who do not undergo adequate primary socialization within a given period of time will likely not proceed through secondary or adult socialization.***
- ***Instead, as their biological potential is not met, the individuals will remain trapped at the level of a child.***
- Thus, The Critical Period Hypothesis, suggests that there is a window of time for primary socialization to operate. Once this period has passed, primary socialization becomes increasingly difficult and less effective. This suggests that the effects of socialization are strongest and most important at the earlier stages in life.

## TOPIC 3

### FAMILY

- Various forms of families in Zimbabwe
- Perspectives on the family
- Family and household patterns:- Changes in the family and household patterns
- Marriage and divorce:- Changing patterns of marriage
- Domestic violence

## INTRODUCING FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

### Kinship, Households and Marriage

Sociologists recognise that it is no simple matter to define what is meant by a Family. It is first useful to define the terms Kinship, Marriage and Household in order to analyse some of the controversies surrounding the definition of "The Family".

- **Kinship:** a relationship between people who are related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption.
  - These are often the same people we regard as our family but because our kin relationships may spread very widely we may not regard our distantly related kin as part of our family or certainly not as close family members. For example, would you regard the children of your brother's wife's cousin as part of your family? Do you know their names? Have you ever seen them?
  - Kin relationships generate patterns of obligations and expectations. However kin obligations may not always be met and kin expectations may be frustrated.
- **Household:** this includes all of those who share a dwelling.
  - These people may also be kin but may include others who are not joined by ties of kinship.
  - Sometimes none of the inhabitants who share a dwelling are related kin as, for example, when a group of students or other young adults share a dwelling.
  - Social Trends 2004 defines a household as "a person living alone or as a group of people who have the same address as their only or main residence and who either share one meal a day or share the living accommodation."
  - An increasing percentage of adults living alone or sharing households are nevertheless members of families living in other households and they have regular contact with these family members so that although they live alone they still feel very much part of their family.
- **Marriage:** a socially approved union between a man and a woman such that children born to the union are recognised as the legitimate offspring of both parents.

- In industrial societies with codified systems of law a marriage is also a legally recognised union but in other societies without such codification a marriage may be socially but not legally recognised.
- Different forms of marriage exist in different cultures.
- **Monogamy** is whereby one woman marries one man common in western societies. However, because divorce is relatively common, adults may practise **serial monogamy** where they have only one marital partner at any particular time but may divorce and marry other partners at fairly regular intervals. The film star Elizabeth Taylor was quite a famous serial monogamist having had about 8 husbands.
- **Polygamy** is an accepted form of marriage in other societies; one individual may have with two or more partners concurrently. We may distinguish also between two types of Polygamy:
  - a) **Polyandry** where a woman has more than one husband as may occur, for example in Tibet. It should be noted that polyandry occurs more rarely than polygyny and that most polyandry is fraternal where individual women marry one or more brothers.
  - b) **Polygyny** where a man has more than one wife as in some Muslim societies. Obviously, families based upon Polyandry and Polygyny is significantly different from Western style families. It should be noted that in societies where polygyny is practised it is practised almost entirely by relatively rich men who can afford to support more than one wife and that the vast majority of married men and women practise monogamous marriage.

Bearing in mind the above information on **Kinship**, **Households** and **Marriage** we can now begin to analyse various approaches to the definition of the family and of families.

We could define the family as containing all related Kin: that is: as all individuals who are related by **blood, marriage and adoption**. However, this definition of the family would exclude couples with or without children who are cohabiting rather than married since clearly the couple are not related by blood, marriage or adoption and it would also include very distant relatives whom we might not necessarily think of as family members.

## THE FAMILY

The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually cohabiting adults ( Murdock, 1949).

For G P Murdock **the family** is "a social group" characterised by

- common residence,
- economic co-operation and
- Reproduction.

It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually cohabiting adults".

Murdock also distinguished between

- **Nuclear families** [parents and dependent children]
  - Defined as a heterosexual couple and their children, natural or adopted, usually living together in the same household. Nowadays they may also produce children via the use of new reproductive technologies.
  - This type of family is the dominant form in modern industrial societies because it the one tha is functional.
- **Extended families** [comprising parents, children and other relatives]
  - Typical of pre-industrial societies.

- The **classic extended family** is a nuclear family plus one or more additional relations living in the same household. These families may be horizontally extended to include, say siblings of the adult members of the nuclear family or vertically to include grandparents or grandchildren.
- The **modified extended family** is a family in which members of a nuclear family retain connections with other relatives who live apart from members of the nuclear family.
- It is argued that where marriage is based on polygyny or polyandry special types of extended families are created containing additional wives or husbands.
- We should note in relation to the nuclear family that the heterosexual couples may be married or cohabiting.
- We should note that some families are defined as reconstituted families
- Some gay and lesbian couples may live with their children from previous heterosexual relationships or they may adopt children or they may produce children via the use of new reproductive technologies

Murdock claimed on the basis of his study of 250 societies of various types that "the nuclear family is a universal social grouping.

According to Murdock the family performs the following functions for societies:

- |                 |                |            |
|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| ○ the sexual,   | ○ economic and |            |
| ○ reproductive, | ○ Educational  | functions. |

These functions are seen as "essential for social life since

- without the sexual and reproductive functions there would be no members of society;
- without the economic function, involving, for example, the provision of food, life would cease and
- Without education, a term Murdock uses for socialisation, there would be no culture.

*Which of the above mentioned personal relationships may reasonably be defined as Families?*

## SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE FAMILY

### Approach Views on the family

#### A. Functionalism Functionalists see the family as **POSITIVE** for society.

They believe that the nuclear family is a positive institution that is beneficial to society - they look at the functions that the nuclear family performs for the good of society as a whole. These functions include:

- Reproduction - the family has children which means the human race keeps going
- Primary socialization - the family teaches children norms (acceptable behaviour) and values (right and wrong)
- Economic support - The family gives financial support, it feeds and provides shelter for its members

#### B. New Right. The New Right sees the family as **NEGATIVE** for society if it is not a nuclear family.

They have similar views to Functionalists. They believe that the nuclear family is very important to society. They say that children from nuclear families:

- Do better at school
- Get better jobs
- Do not turn to crime

The New Right believes that Single parents and same sex couples are bad for society.

#### C. Marxism: - Marxists see the family as **NEGATIVE** for society.

- Marxists are critical of the family and society.
- They believe society is based on a conflict between the classes - **working class and ruling class**.
- The family helps to maintain class differences in society as the rich can afford to give their children a better start in life than the poor, e.g. pay for a better education, and get them a good job either in their own business or their friends businesses.



- Marxists believe the family socializes the working class to accept that it is fair that the classes are unequal.
- D. Feminism: - Feminists see the family as NEGATIVE for society.**
- Feminists believe the family is bad for women.
- Girls and boys learn their different gender roles within the family through socialization.
- Girls copy their mothers, doing housework, whilst boys copy their fathers. Thus they learn that this is how male and female roles should be.
- Feminists believe that the family is male dominated - the term for this is patriarchal.

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## Perspectives on the family

### Functionalist Views of Society

Functionalists regard society as a system made up of different parts which depend on each other. Different institutions each perform specific functions within a society to keep that society going, in the same way as the different organs of a human body perform different functions in order to maintain the whole.

In functionalist thought, the family is a good thing; it is functional both for the individual members and the wider society.

The family is a particularly important institution as this it is the 'basic building block' of society which performs the crucial functions of:-

- Producing new members of society.
- socialising the young and
- Meeting the emotional needs of its members.
- Stable families underpin social order and economic stability.

Functionalists argue that the nuclear family is universal because it is functional for society and because it operates in accordance with the natural characteristics of males and females. By implication it seems that other family forms are inferior.

#### A. George Peter Murdock - The four essential functions of the nuclear family

After studying 250 different societies Murdock argued that family was universal (in all of them). Suggested there were 'four essential functions' of the family:

1. Stable satisfaction of the sex drive - within monogamous relationships
2. The biological reproduction of the next generation - without which society cannot continue.
3. Socialisation of the young - teaching basic norms and values
4. Meeting its members' economic needs - producing food and shelter for example.

### Criticisms of Murdock

1. Feminist Sociologists argue that arguing that the family is essential is ideological because traditional family structures typically disadvantage women.
2. It is feasible that other institutions could perform the functions above.
3. Research has shown that there are some cultures which don't appear to have 'families' - the Nayar for example.

#### A. Talcott Parson's Functional Fit Theory

- Parson's has a historical perspective on the evolution of the nuclear family.
- His functional fit theory is that as society changes, the type of family that 'fits' that society, and the functions it performs change.
- Over the last 200 years, society has moved from pre-industrial to industrial - and the main family type has changed from the extended family to the nuclear family.

- The nuclear family fits the more complex industrial society better, but it performs a reduced number of functions.
- The **extended family** consisted of parents, children, grandparents and aunts and uncles living under one roof, or in a collection of houses very close to each other.
- Such a large family unit 'fitted' pre-industrial society as the family was entirely responsible for the education of children, producing food and caring for the sick - basically it did everything for all its members.
- In contrast to pre-industrial society, in industrial society (from the 1800s in the UK) the isolated "**nuclear family**" consisting of only parents and children becomes the norm.
- This type of family 'fits' industrial societies because it required a mobile workforce.
- The extended family was too difficult to move when families needed to move to find work to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing and growing economy.
- Furthermore, there was also less need for the extended family as more and more functions, such as health and education, gradually came to be carried out by the state.

### Criticisms of Parson's Theory of Functional Fit

- Basically - it's too 'neat' - social change doesn't happen in such an orderly manner:
- Laslett found that church records show only 10% of households contained extended kin before the industrial revolution. This suggests the family was already nuclear before industrialisation.
- Young and Wilmott found that Extended Kin networks were still strong in East London as late as the 1970s.

### Parsons - The two essential or irreducible functions of the family

- According to Parsons, although the nuclear family performs reduced functions, it is still the only institution that can perform two core functions in society -
  1. Primary Socialisation and
  2. The Stabilisation of Adult Personalities.

1. Primary Socialisation - The nuclear family is still responsible for teaching children the norms and values of society known as Primary Socialisation.

- An important part of socialisation according to Functionalists is 'gender role socialisation.
- If primary socialisation is done correctly, then
  - Boys learn to adopt the 'instrumental role' (also known as the 'breadwinner role') - they go on to go out to work and earn money.
  - Girls learn to adopt the 'expressive role' - doing all the 'caring work', housework and bringing up the children.

2. The stabilisation of adult personalities refers to the emotional security which is achieved within a marital relationship between two adults.

- According to Parsons working life in Industrial society is stressful and the family is a place where the working man can return and be 'de-stressed' by his wife, which reduces conflict in society. This is also known as the 'warm bath theory'

### Criticisms of Functionalism on the family

#### 1. Downplaying Conflict

- Both Murdock and Parsons paint a very rosy picture of family life, presenting it as a harmonious and integrated institution. However, they downplay conflict in the family, particularly the 'darker side' of family life, such as violence against women and child abuse.
- It is argued that Murdock and later functionalists have overstated the effectiveness of the nuclear family and neglected its possible disadvantages.
- According to its critics the nuclear family may, in several respects, be dysfunctional

## 2. Being out of Date

- Parson's view of the instrumental and expressive roles of men and women is very old-fashioned.
- Today, with the majority of women in paid work, and the blurring of gender roles, it seems that both partners are more likely to take on both expressive and instrumental roles

## 3. Ignoring the exploitation of women ( Feminists)

- Women suffer from the sexual division of labour in the family this is ignored by functionalists.
- Even today, women still end up being the primary child carers in 90% of families, and suffer the burden of extra work that this responsibility carries compared to their male partners.
- Gender roles are socially constructed and usually involve the oppression of women. There are no biological reasons for the functionalist's view of separation of roles into male breadwinner & female homemaker. These roles lead to the disadvantages being experienced by women.

## 4. Functionalism is too deterministic -

- It ignores the fact that children actively create their own personalities. An individual's personality isn't pre-determined at birth or something they have no control in.
- Functionalism incorrectly assumes an almost robotic adoption of society's values via our parents; clearly there are many examples where this isn't the case.
- It is argued that the nuclear family is not a universal social institution.
- In the case of advanced industrial societies, it is argued that **lone** parent families, heterosexual couples without children, gay and lesbian couples with or without children and strong friendship groups can reasonably be defined as families.
- It is claimed that because other types of family arrangement exist both in advanced industrial and elsewhere in the world it is illogical to assume that the operation of the nuclear family derives from the requirements of human nature.
- Cross-cultural variations in family forms suggest that family forms are socially constructed rather than determined by some universal human nature which is invariant as between different societies
- The sexual, reproductive, educational and economic functions performed by in nuclear families can also be performed efficiently in other family forms in other societies.
- Family functions may be fulfilled and perhaps in organisation which in some respects are presented as alternatives to families. Check your textbooks for information on Kibbutzim and Communes

## Marxist views on the Family

- Adopts a structuralist perspective
- The family is examined by looking at its relationship with the wider social structure by focusing on:-
  - i. The influence of the economic base on the family
  - ii. The role of the family as part of the super structure in producing the class system.

## The family as a product of the economic base

The family development through successive stages of history was traced by Engels and later by Marxist this makes useful contrast with the 'march of progress' functionalist views.

## The family as part of the superstructure

- It reproduces labour power: - physical and ideological reproduction at no cost to the employer.
- Married women are a reserve army of labour, available for work when required but not seen as having the right to work.
- Family is a refuge from brutality and alienation of working life: - members become obsessed with love, sex, marriage and home comforts.
- Family is consumer base for modern capitalism as families demand family cars, consumer durables, etc.

## Feminist views on the family

- The family is not a voluntary unit based on love and choice but an economic unit which creates and maintains female dependence.
- The family is not efficient in performing its functions as many women, children and old people eventually depend on the state institutions for support and care.
- Child care is explained, not in terms of family relations, but its functions in industrial society.
- Women are exploited by men as housework is real productive work. (*unpaid domestic work*)
- Economic dependency makes and keeps women falsely conscious.

## TYPES OF FAMILY

Various factors are used when classifying family types and these include: - Residence, Authority and Size.

- a. **Residence.** The place where the newly wedded partners are going to reside is used to classify families. There are three family types using this system.
  - i. **Patrilocal family:** new couple goes to reside with the husband's family
  - ii. **Matrilocal family:** new couple goes to live with the wife's family.
  - iii. **Neolocal family:** new couple set up a new residence of their own independent of either parents' residence.
- b. **Authority.** Two types of family come out of this category where centre of authority is considered.
  - i. **Patriarchal family:** the father is the formal head of family. Father's authority is considered final. Most patriarchal families are patrilocal.
  - ii. **Matriarchal family:** Mother is the central figure in the family. Mother wields power and authority in the family. Most matriarchal families are matrilocal.
- c. **Size:** Two types of family come up when family size is considered.
  - i. **Nuclear family:** typically consists of a mother, father and dependent children.
  - ii. An **extended family** consists of parents and children along with either:
    - Grandparents - vertically extended (different generations)
    - Aunts and uncles - horizontally extended
    - An extended family may also take the form of polygamy: where one partner is married to two or more partners i.e. one husband married to two or more wives or one wife married to two or more husbands.

## FAMILY TYPES IN ZIMBABWE

There are many different family types that exist in Zimbabwe today. The 2 main family types people are aware of are extended and nuclear families.

- i. A **nuclear family** typically consists of a mother, father and dependent children.
  - ii. An **extended family** consists of parents and children along with either:
    - Grandparents - vertically extended (different generations)
    - Aunts and uncles - horizontally extended
- **The modern nuclear family** - married or cohabiting couples with or without children.
  - **The reconstituted family** - a family created as a result of divorced couples remarrying who may have children from their previous marriage.
  - **The lone parent family** - the fastest growing family structure in Britain. Where one parent brings up 1 or more children
  - **Same sex families** (lesbian or gay) this family type is not common in Zimbabwe as it is not legally recognized and therefore it accounts for a small proportion of all families. However in countries like Britain such families have increased in number more recently as a result of The Civil Partnership Act of 2005 which legally recognized same-sex relationships.

## CHANGES IN THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD PATTERNS

The traditional nuclear family, with a mother, father and their children has been put under threat. In the nuclear family parents were married and usually the children would be their biological offspring. Today there

are many different types of families - the modern nuclear family is closest to the traditional nuclear family, but the adults may live together without being married (cohabit) and they might not have children. In the past it made sense to talk about "The Family", but now it is more accurate to talk about "Families" because there is so much diversity.

Different sociologists will view these changes in the family differently, seeing some of them as good or bad for society.

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Marxists are critical of all family structures; because they are still used maintain class inequality. They do say that there are class differences in these changes, with the middle class more likely to be traditional nuclear families and more single parents in the working and under class (the unemployed).

### **Changes in Family**

#### **1. More people living together without being married.**

- Less people practice religion nowadays (going to church, believing in God etc.) so do not see living together or having children outside of marriage as a sin.
- People can now opt for a civil partnership rather than traditional marriage. More people get divorced and may decide not to remarry when they meet a new partner.
- There are some same sex couples although it is illegal in Zimbabwe.
- People are more likely to live together as a trial before deciding to get married.
- Feminists say this is a good thing, as marriage is a patriarchal institution, meaning it keeps men in power and oppresses (pushes down) women.
- Gay rights groups also say this is a good thing, as gay couples are only allowed to marry in some religions, but in others being homosexual is a sin. Living together or having a legal civil partnership increases gay equality.
- Most Functionalists are OK with the traditional nuclear family, as it still serves the function of socializing children and teaching them how to be useful members of society.
- Some Functionalists and the New Right believe that the traditional nuclear family is the only family that can do the job properly, so would argue that parents should be married and stay together for life.

#### **2. More single parent families**

- Divorce laws have made it easier for people to get a divorce and usually one parent gets custody of the children.
- There are more teenaged pregnancies than in the past, where the mother and father are unlikely to be in a long-term relationship.
- The availability of in-vitro-fertilization (IVF) and sperm banks mean women can have children without needing to have a sexual relationship with a man.
- Feminists fought for the change to divorce law, as many women were in abusive marriages and couldn't get out of them. Therefore, they see divorce as a positive thing. However, they also point out that it is women who take on most of the childcare and are left with the burden of bringing up the baby on their own when relationships don't work out, which means more women are living in poverty.
- Functionalists do not think that a single parent family can perform all the important functions of the family (eg. gender role socialisation, financially providing for children etc.), so are against this type of family.
- The New Right is completely against this type of family and sees it as responsible for everything that is wrong with society (crime, yob culture, dependence on benefits etc.).

#### **3. More Same Sex families**

- There are still only a very small number of same sex families, but these are now more socially acceptable. This is because of campaigns by gay rights groups and changes in laws, such as being allowed to teach about same sex relationships in schools and an equal age of sexual consent.
- The introduction of civil partnership agreements, which are similar to marriage contracts, but open to same and opposite sex couples.
- Gay couples are now allowed to adopt.
- Functionalists say that the family and other institutions of society need to evolve in order to continue to be useful in society, so would view same sex families as positive providing that they continue to do what they are supposed to.
- Feminists have mixed views on same sex families, because there is still economic inequality between men and women, which means that gay men are more likely to have more money, better jobs and higher status than lesbians.
- Therefore, same sex families should not be looked at as being all the same.
- The New Right see same sex families as bad for society because they are socializing children the wrong way.

#### 4. Smaller household size

- There are more single person households (a person living on their own) – this is due to:
  - Women living longer than men, so they are more likely to be a widow with grown up children and grandchildren who do not live with them.
  - Younger women choosing a career over marriage and family.
- Families also have fewer children than in the past:
  - Some couples choose not to start a family at all for financial or career reasons.
  - There is more infertility than in the past (people can't have children of their own) but also more availability of contraception.
  - Fewer children die during childbirth and childhood because of better healthcare and living standards, so families do not need to have large numbers of children just in case some of them die.
    - Feminists view these changes positively, as women have greater choice over their future and can use contraception to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies whilst still being sexually active. It is more acceptable for women to choose a career rather than a family than in the past.
    - The New Right believe that a woman's role in society is to be a wife and mother, so would see these changes as having a negative impact on society.
    - Some Functionalists would see these changes as positive, because the population is increasing in size. Therefore smaller families ensure society does not become unstable.

#### 5. More families from diverse cultural backgrounds

- The impact of globalization
  - Many Feminists see this change as positive, because women are moving away from countries where they have few or no rights, sometimes where rape is used as a weapon in civil wars.
  - The New Right is completely against immigration, because it waters down local culture and (they say) leads to higher unemployment.
  - Many Functionalists agree with the New Right opinion, but some point to the useful function served by Global culture.

### MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

#### Factors Associated with Divorce

- Perhaps the most important factor in the increase in divorce over the past hundred years has been the greater social *acceptance* of divorce. It is no longer considered necessary to endure an unhappy marriage.
- More important, various religious denominations have relaxed their negative attitudes toward divorce, so that most religious leaders no longer treat it as a sin.
- The growing acceptance of divorce is a worldwide phenomenon. Divorce is also easier in the sense that the stigma attaching to divorce has been reduced.
  - Most states have adopted more liberal divorce laws in the past three decades. No-fault divorce laws, which allow a couple to end their marriage without fault on either side (by specifying adultery, for instance), accounted for an initial surge in the divorce rate after they were introduced in the 1970s, but appear to have had little effect beyond that.
- Divorce has become a more practical option in newly formed families, since families tend to have fewer children now than in the past.
- A general increase in family incomes, coupled with the availability of free legal aid to some poor people, has meant that more couples can afford costly divorce proceedings.
- As society provides greater opportunities for women, more and more wives are becoming less dependent on their husbands, both economically and emotionally. They may feel more able to leave a marriage if it seems hopeless.
- Another possible cause of increasing divorce rates is marital conflict over roles. If a woman is working she may still be expected to perform all the normal functions of the household, in accordance with her traditional gender role.
  - There may be a contradiction between the normative expectations of the wife's role and her role as a wage earner.

- Talcott Parsons and Ronald Fletcher argue that marital breakdown is on the increase because people want more from their marriage, and so are more likely to end a relationship that they do not find acceptable.
- Income and class also affect the likelihood of divorce. In the USA an inverse relationship between income and marital breakdown has been established - that is, the lower the family income, the higher the rate of separation and divorce. Studies in Britain show a relationship between occupational class and divorce. The lower the class, the higher the divorce rate.
- There is also an inverse relationship between the age at which a couple marries and divorce.
  - The lower the age at marriage, the higher the rate of divorce. This factor is also linked to class, since working-class couples are more likely to marry at an earlier age.
- Also marriage is more likely to end in separation or divorce if one or both partners' parents were divorced.
- Marital breakdown is also more likely if the spouses have different social backgrounds.
- Marital breakdown occurs more frequently when one or both partners have certain occupations
  - Divorce is more common among long-distance lorry drivers, sales representatives, engineers, technicians whose jobs involve frequent separations from their spouses and more opportunities for contacts with the opposite sex. Also actors, authors, artists, company directors and hotelkeepers have higher divorce rates owing to their high involvement with their work and low involvement with their marriage.

### **Impact of Divorce on Children**

- Divorce is traumatic for all involved, but it has special meaning for the children whose parents divorce.
- Of course, for some of these children, divorce signals the welcome end to a very dysfunctional relationship. Perhaps that is why studies that tracked both before and after their parents' divorce found that their behavior did not suffer from the marital breakups.
- Other studies have shown greater unhappiness among children who live amid parental conflict than among children whose parents are divorced.
- Still, it would be simplistic to assume that children are automatically better off following the breakup of their parents' marriage. The interests of the parents do not necessarily serve children well (H. Kim 2011; Zi 2007).





## TOPIC 4

### CULTURE

- Forms of culture
- Elements of culture
- Characteristics of culture
- Perspectives in culture



# Culture

## DEFINITION OF CULTURE

- Giddens (2001) says culture refers to the ways of life of the members of society or groups within society which has the following aspects-
  - dress, marriage customs and family life, patterns of work, religious ceremonies, leisure pursuits and goods created.
- Robertson (1987) sums up what culture is by simply saying it is all the shared products of human society.
- The culture of a society is the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation (Ralph Linton in Haralambos and Holbon) (without culture there would be no human society)
- Macdonis and Plummer (2002) say culture is constituted by beliefs, values, behaviour and material objects that constitute a people's way of life.
- According to Linton (1945) 'The culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation'

From the above culture has been categorized into two:

- i. Material culture which are physical objects made by members of society, for example clothes or cars.
  - ii. Non-material culture which are abstract human creations that not physical, for example language, beliefs, skills, or rules, customs, myths, political systems or family patterns.
- Culture is a way of life for a people:
    - It encompasses objects and symbols, the meaning given to those objects and symbols, and the norms, values and beliefs of a group of people (Society).

According to Barnard and Burgess (1996), "Societies work or function because each member of that society plays a particular **role**. Each **role** carries a **status** and **norms** that are informed by the **values** and **beliefs** of the **culture** of that society..."

Culture means the language, beliefs, shared customs, values, knowledge, skills, roles, and norms in society. It is the way life of a social group or society. Culture is socially transmitted i.e. it is passed on through socialisation

## N.B

**A. Values:** - beliefs that we have about what is important, both to us and to society as a whole. A good example is that of the Ten Commandments in the Christian religion. Some values are very personal while others are held by large groups (society). When held by large groups values become **morals**. An example of this is that in our society it is not good to kill another human being.

**Values:** - tell us what we believe to be right or wrong but they do not tell us how we should behave in any given situation; this function is played by **norms** in the over structure of our social behaviour.

**B. Norms:** - these are ways of and thinking that are seen as normal in society. Every value that we hold has a number of associated ideas called **norms** (short for normative rule or normal rules). These are expected, socially accepted ways of behaving in any given situation. Like values they differ from individual to individual and society to society. Norms are very specific rules that govern our behaviour in particular situations and values are general ideas that support the norm.

**Culture** is therefore a combined effect of norms and values: - way of life

**Three types of norms are there: -**

- a) **Folkways:** - these are fairly weak kinds of norms, like greeting to some people you know when you meet them in the street and expect them to respond positively, if they keep quiet then a friendship norm has been broken and this might lead to you are assessing your relationship with them.
- b) **Mores:** - these are much stronger norms and a failure to conform to them will result in much stronger social response from the person or people who resent your failure to behave appropriately. An example maybe telling your teacher to mind his business when they tell you to stop talking in class.
- c) **Laws (legal norms):** - a law is an expression of a very strong moral norm that exists to control people's behaviour. Punishment for the infraction of legal norms will depend on norm that has been broken and the culture in which the legal norm develops.

**C. Social roles:** - represents the way that someone is expected to behave in a particular situation.

- Roles are therefore the parts that we play in our relationships with others; an idea which is similar that of an actor playing part in a play.
- Individuals play many roles in society, examples are
  - Teacher.
  - Student
  - Mother
  - Son
  - Employer
  - Employee
- The roles played have a number of associated characteristics.
- Roles can be **achieved** (one chooses to play) or **ascribed** (society driven).
- There are also other roles that specifically relate to the roles that we play. This is the **role-set** and examples of role set for college students might be:
  - Other students
  - Class teacher
  - Other teachers
  - College care takers
  - College Administration staff
- Roles are played in relation to other roles hence the need to know the role set.
- Status: - level of respect we are expected to give to a person playing a particular role and every role we play has an associated status. Statuses can be measured against each other e.g. teacher vs. student etc.
- Statuses influence human behaviour as they are closely related to the idea of power.

### Types of culture

**High Culture:** - cultural creations that have a particularly high status e.g. music, art, dress etc. high culture is seen to be superior to lesser forms of culture. The elite (the better educated with more monies and power) tend to have a distinct culture from the masses. In this case the audience is seen as being passive. The assumption is that the audience is manipulated by the media.

**Folk culture:** - culture of ordinary people, particularly those living in pre-industrial societies e.g. traditional stories and songs that have been handed down from generation to generation mainly through word of mouth. According to Robert Redfield (1947) this culture depends on strong extended families in folk societies, supportive communities and a local culture. These are not present in urban societies.

**Mass Culture:** - product of mass media and includes feature films, TV soap operas and pop music. Mass culture has led to the development of lack of community and development of individualism and selfishness. The media has become a strong agent of socialisation bringing about what looks like one big culture wiping out local

cultures. Mass culture can be used to reflect the effects of mass media like its effect on fashion and consumerism.

**Popular culture:** - similar to mass culture, includes any cultural products appreciated by large number of people. Here the audience is responsible for shaping and changing culture, the audience is not passive but active.

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146 **Subculture:** - small group in society that share the same tastes and life experiences i.e. life styles, musical tastes, religious beliefs etc. including youths gangsters. In other words it is an identifiable group within a culture whose members share values and behaviour patterns which are different from mainstream norms, Subcultures can be a form of resistance to main stream culture.

For example:-

- a. In the 1970s Willis looked at why working class kids get working class jobs. He studied a group of boys "Willis Lads". The lads rejected school and formed anti-school subculture. They coped with their own underachievement by having a subculture where education did not matter and where having a laugh was more important.
- b. Fuller (1980) found that Afro-Caribbean girls in London formed a subculture that worked hard to prove negative labelling wrong.

**Global culture:** - implies an all-embracing culture that is common to people all over the world and has been seen as non-existent as Featherstone (1990) argues that people do not share a common life style, however some cultural products go across national boundaries. According to Giddens (1990) technological changes have led to globalisation. Goods can be transported to anywhere in the world, and information can be quickly transmitted across the globe. This now means cultures that used to be local are now global for example music and films now cross national boundaries.

## PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURE

There are structural and action theories of culture.

### Structural theories

- Individuals are shaped by society.
- These theories look at how society is structured social structures include
  - The Family
  - Education
  - Religion.
- Culture is produced by social structures
- Examples of structural theories are Functionalism and Marxism.

### Action Theories

- Individual shape societies as individual actions are most important.
- Look at the action of individuals
- Believe individuals choose how to act rather than simply respond to social forces.
- In their view culture is produced by individuals; culture is actually determined by the behaviour and interaction of individuals.
- Interpretivism is an action theory.

**Functionalism:** - culture is produced by social structure to create consensus.

To functionalist culture is important for it has functions in society.

- A shared culture allows society to run smoothly as they believe that the structures of society are set up to allow for this.
- For Durkheim shared norms and values hold society together. For him culture is a form of social glue that binds people together by creating shared interests and purposes.
- Shared culture is passed down from generation to generation through socialisation. Individual thus internalise norms and values of society (rules and ideas). These will be part of who one is; personality or identity. Everyone ends sharing the same norms and values (consensus).
- Culture exists outside the wishes of the individual (Social fact).
- People have to conform to culture of their society if they are to avoid punishment.
- Culture helps to socialise people into appropriate behaviour which prevents society from breaking down into chaos.

### **Marxism: - Culture is produced by social structure to cover class conflict**

- The rich have the most influence in defining norms, values and beliefs in society.
- Structures in society are set up to save the interests of the rich not to keep society ticking along as smoothly as possible culture therefore is set up to save the interests of the rich.
- People are socialised into a culture based on their social class.
- Institutions like the family, education, religion and media lead people individuals into accepting inequalities of capitalism.
- Working class individuals are oppressed by capitalism via culture.
- Marxists see mass media helping capitalism to oppress the working classes by destroying community and individuality and encouraging acceptance of authority and discouraging people from thinking for themselves
- Thus mass culture helps to prevent revolution from ever happening.
- Capitalism creates false needs and commodity fetishism.
  - ▶ Mass culture encourages people to think they need to buy things they really do not need to like iPods, cupboards etc.
  - ▶ Commodity fetishism: - where people false needs create obsessions or desires about consumer goods. According to Golding and Muddock (1991) people buy products because capitalism promotes goods via the media.
  - ▶ Adorno and Horkheimer said commodity fetishism was like a religion: Capitalism creates desires that only capitalism can satisfy.
- ❖ To sum up: -
  - i. Mass culture is used to dull the minds of the working class
  - ii. Mass culture promotes capitalist ideology
  - iii. Commodity fetishism promotes economic activity.
  - iv. The population are passive victims of mass culture.

### **Interpretivism**

- This is an action theory which sees individual action as important in shaping society and culture in particular.
- People try to make sense of society by interpreting society around them.
- To them culture comes from the ideas of individuals in society and how these people interact with each other
- They acknowledge the role of social structures but suggest that individual reactions to social structures are different.
- Individual are not just products of socialisation but they choose how to respond.
- Jonathan Gershuny (1992) made an interpretivist analysis of gender roles in the home
  - i. Some women wanted to work outside the home. (*the individual bit*)

- ii. Male partners then took on more child care and housework. It then became acceptable for man to adopt roles in the family that had been considered feminine. *(thus individual choices influenced social change)*

## Neo Marxism

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- Largely influenced Marxism
- Argue that culture is independent from economic influences.
- There is no straightforward correspondence between class and culture

## Feminism

Studies suggest that popular culture stereotypes women into roles such as house wife or sex object, these roles are then reign forced in society.

- Feminist trace the link between popular culture and gender socialisation. According to Ferguson and McRobbie (1978) study of magazines showed they promoted traditional female roles
- Radical feminist such as Andrea Dworkin (1981) in her study of pornography suggests that many images of women in popular culture encourage and justify violence against women.
- Some feminist have also argued that popular cultural representations of women can also be empowering.

## ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

### Elements of Culture

Culture includes within itself elements that make up the essence of a society or a social group. The major ones include: Symbols, values, norms, and language

### Symbols

Symbols are the central components of culture. Symbols refer to anything to which people attach meaning and which they use to communicate with others. More specifically, symbols are words, objects, gestures, sounds or images that represent something else rather than themselves. Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to culture. It is the human ability to give a thing or event an arbitrary meaning and grasp and appreciate that meaning. There is no obvious natural or necessary connection between a symbol and what it symbolizes.

### Language

Language, specifically defined as a system of verbal and in many cases written symbols with rules about how those symbols can be strung together to convey more complex meanings, is the distinctive capacity and possession of humans; it is a key element of culture.

Culture encompasses language, and through language, culture is communicated and transmitted. Without language it would be impossible to develop, elaborate and transmit culture to the future generation.

### Values

Values are essential elements of non-material culture. They may be defined as general, abstract guidelines for our lives, decisions, goals, choices, and actions. They are shared ideas of a groups or a society as to what is right or wrong, correct or incorrect, desirable or undesirable, acceptable or unacceptable, ethical or unethical, etc., regarding something. They are general road maps for our lives. Values are shared and are learned in group. They can be positive or negative. For example, honesty, truth - telling, respect for others, hospitality, helping those in need, etc are positive values. Examples of negative values include theft, indecency, disrespect,

dishonesty, falsehood, frugality, etc. The Hippocratic Oath in medical profession dictates that practitioners should among other things, keep the secrets of patients, provide them whatever help they can, do no harm to patients willingly, etc. This is an example of positive value.

**Values are dynamic, meaning they change over time.**

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They are also static, meaning they tend to persist without any significant modification. Values are also diversified, meaning they vary from place to place and culture to culture. Some values are universal because there is bio- psychological unity among people everywhere and all times. In other words, they emanate from the basic similarity of mankind's origins, nature and desires. For example, dislike for killing people, concepts and practices of disease management, cleanliness, personal hygiene, cosmetics, incest taboo, etc.

## **Norms**

Norms are also essential elements of culture. They are implicit principles for social life, relationship and interaction. Norms are detailed and specific rules for specific situations. They tell us how to do something, what to do, what not to do, when to do it, why to do it, etc. Norms are derived from values. That means, for every specific norm, there is a general value that determines its content.

Individuals may not act according to the defined values and norms of the group. Therefore, violation of values and norms and deviating from the standard values and norms are often common. Social norms may be divided into two. These are mores and folkways

### **Mores:**

Are important and stronger social norms for existence, safety, well-being and continuity of the society or the group or society. Violation of, and deviation from these kinds of norms, may result in serious reactions from the groups. The strongest norms are regarded as the formal laws of a society or a group.

Formal laws are written and codified social norms. The other kinds of mores are called conventions.

Conventions are established rules governing behavior; they are generally accepted ideals by the society.

Conventions may also be regarded as written and signed agreements between nations to govern the behaviors of individuals, groups and nations.

### **Folkways:**

Are the ways of life developed by a group of people. They are detailed and minor instructions, traditions or rules for day-to-day life that help us function effectively and smoothly as members of a group. Here, violating such kinds of norms may not result in a serious punishment unlike violating mores. They are less morally binding. In other words, folkways are appropriate ways of behaving and doing things. Examples may include table etiquette, dressing rules, walking, talking, etc.

Conformity to folkways usually occurs automatically without any national analysis and is based upon custom passed from generation to generation. They are not enforced by law, but by informal social control. They are not held to be important or obligatory as mores, or moral standards, and their violation is not as such severely sanctioned. Although folkways are less binding, people have to behave according to accepted standards. Some exceptional behaviors are regarded eccentric behaviors.

Folkways are distinguished from laws and mores in that they are designed, maintained and enforced by public sentiment, or custom, whereas laws are institutionalized, designed, maintained and enforced by the political authority of the society. Folkways in turn may be divided into two sub types: fashion and custom.

**Fashion:**

Page 50 Is a form of behavior, type of folkways that is socially approved at a given time but subject to periodic change. Adherents combine both deviation and conformity to norm of a certain group.

**Custom:**

Is a folkway or form of social behavior that, having persisted a long period of time, has become traditional and well established in a society and has received some degree of formal recognition. Custom is a pattern of action shared by most or all members of a society. Habit is a personality trait, where as the custom is a group trait. Fashion and customs can be differentiated in that while custom changes at slower rate, fashion changes at a faster rate.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE**

**1. Culture is organic and supra-organic:**

It is organic when we consider the fact that there is no culture without human society. It is supra organic, because it is far beyond any individual lifetime. Individuals come and go, but culture remains and persists

**2. Culture is overt and covert:**

It is generally divided into material and non-material cultures. Material culture consists of any tangible human made objects such as tools, automobiles, buildings, etc material culture consists of any non-physical aspects like language, belief, ideas, knowledge, attitude, values, etc.

**3. Culture is explicit and implicit:**

It is explicit when we consider those actions which can be explained and described easily by those who perform them. It is implicit when we consider those things we do, but are unable to explain them, yet we believe them to be so.

**4. Culture is ideal and manifest (actual):**

Ideal culture involves the way people ought to behave or what they ought to do. Manifest culture involves what people actually do.

**5. Culture is stable and yet changing:**

Culture is stable when we consider what people hold valuable and are handing over to the next generation in order to maintain their norms and values. However, when culture comes into contact with other cultures, it can change. However, culture changes not only because of direct or indirect contact between cultures, but also through innovation and adaptation to new circumstances.

**6. Culture is shared and learned:**

Culture is the public property of a social group of people (shared). Individuals get cultural knowledge of the group through socialization. However, we should note that all things shared among people might not be cultural, as there are many biological attributes which people share among themselves (Kottak, 2002).

## **7. Culture is symbolic:**

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It is based on the purposeful creation and usage of symbols; it is exclusive to humans. Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to culture. Symbolic thought is the human ability to give a thing or event an arbitrary meaning and grasp and appreciate that meaning

### **Symbols are the central components of culture.**

Symbols refer to anything to which people attach meaning and which they use to communicate with others. More specifically, symbols are words, objects, gestures, sounds or images that represent something else rather than themselves. Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to culture. It is the human ability to give a thing or event an arbitrary meaning and grasp and appreciate that meaning. There is no obvious natural or necessary connection between a symbol and what it symbolizes (Henslin and Nelson, 1995; Macdonald, 1997).

Culture thus works in the symbolic domain emphasizing meaning, rather than the technical/practical rational side of human behavior.

All actions have symbolic content as well as being action in and of themselves. Things, actions, behaviors, etc, always stand for something else than merely, the thing itself.



# TOPIC 5

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## RELIGION

- Theories of religion
- Religious organisation and movements in Zimbabwe
- Secularisation

### WHAT IS RELIGION

Emile Durkheim (1915) defines religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things...”

While Religious beliefs can be highly personal, religion is also a social institution. Religion is found in all social groupings and therefore is a cultural universal as some form of religion is found in every known culture.

In studying religion, sociologists distinguish between the experience, beliefs, and rituals of a religion.

1. **Religious experience** refers to the conviction or sensation that one is connected to “the divine.” This type of communion might be experienced when people are praying or meditating.
2. **Religious beliefs** are specific ideas that members of a particular faith hold to be true, such as that Jesus Christ was the son of God, or believing in reincarnation. Another illustration of religious beliefs is that different religions adhere to certain stories of world creation.
3. **Religious rituals** are behaviours or practices that are either required or expected of the members of a particular group, such as bar mitzvah or confession (Barkan and Greenwood 2003).

**In the wake of 19th century European industrialization and secularization, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx attempted to examine the relationship between religion and society: -**

- They are among the founding thinkers of modern sociology.
- 1. **French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) defined religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” (1915).**
  - ▶ To him, sacred meant Extraordinary—something that inspired wonder and which seemed connected to the concept of “the divine.”
  - ▶ Durkheim argued that “religion happens” in society when there is a separation between the profane (ordinary life) and the sacred (1915).
    - ▶ A rock, for example, isn't sacred or profane as it exists. But if someone makes it into a headstone, or another person uses it for landscaping, it takes on different meanings—one sacred, one profane.
  - ▶ Durkheim is generally considered the first sociologist who analysed religion in terms of its societal impact.

- ▶ Durkheim believed that religion is about community:
  - ▶ It binds people together (social cohesion),
  - ▶ promotes behaviour consistency (social control), and
  - ▶ Offers strength for people during life's Transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose).
- ☀ By applying the methods of natural science to the study of society, he held that the source of religion and morality is the collective mind-set of society and that the cohesive bonds of social order result from common values in a society. He contended that these values need to be maintained to maintain social stability.
- ☀ But what would happen if religion were to decline? This question led Durkheim to posit that religion is not just a social creation but something that represents the power of society: When people celebrate sacred things, they celebrate the power of their society. By this reasoning, even if traditional religion disappeared, society wouldn't necessarily dissolve.
- 2. **Whereas Durkheim saw religion as a source of social stability, German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864–1920) believed it was a precipitator of social change.**
  - ▶ He examined the effects of religion on economic activities and noticed that heavily Protestant societies—such as those in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Germany—were the most highly developed capitalist societies and that their most successful business leaders were Protestant.
  - ▶ In his writing *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he contends that the Protestant work ethic influenced the development of capitalism. Weber noted that certain kinds of Protestantism supported the pursuit of material gain by motivating believers to work hard, be successful, and not spend their profits on frivolous things. (The modern use of "work ethic" comes directly from Weber's Protestant ethic, although it has now lost its religious connotations.)
- 3. **German philosopher, journalist, and revolutionary socialist Karl Marx (1818–1883) also studied the social impact of religion.**
  - ▶ He believed religion reflects the social stratification of society and that it maintains inequality and perpetuates the status quo.
  - ▶ For him, religion was just an extension of working class (proletariat) economic suffering.
  - ▶ He famously argued that religion is "is the opium of the people" (1844).

**For Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, who were reacting to the great social and economic upheaval of the late 19th century and early 20th century in Europe, religion was an integral part of society.**

1. For Durkheim, religion was a force for cohesion that helped bind the members of society to the group, while
2. Weber believed religion could be understood as something separate from society.
3. Marx considered religion inseparable from the economy and the worker. Religion could not be understood apart from the capitalist society that perpetuated inequality.

**Despite their different views, these social theorists all believed in the centrality of religion to society.**

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Religion**

Modern-day sociologists often apply one of three major theoretical perspectives. These views offer different lenses through which to study and understand society: functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory. Let's explore how scholars applying these paradigms understand religion.

#### **Functionalism**

- ▶ Functionalists contend that religion serves several functions in society.
  - ▶ Religion, in fact, depends on society for its existence, value, and significance, and vice versa.
  - ▶ From this perspective, religion serves several purposes, like providing answers to spiritual mysteries, offering emotional comfort, and creating a place for social interaction and social control.
- In providing answers, religion defines the spiritual world and spiritual forces, including divine beings. For example, it helps answer questions like "How was the world created?" "Why do we suffer?" "Is there a plan for our lives?" and "Is there an afterlife?" according to Parsons religion makes sense of all experiences, no matter how meaningless or contradictory they appear.
- As another function, religion provides emotional comfort in times of crisis. Religious rituals bring order, comfort, and organization through shared familiar symbols and patterns of behaviour.

- According to Malinowski (1954), Parsons (1965a) religion deals with situations of emotional stress that threaten social order. Unpredictable or stressful events like births and deaths create disruptions. Religion manages these tensions and promotes tensions.
- Functionalists believe religion helps in group cohesion and companionship. It creates opportunities for social interaction and the formation of groups. It provides social support and social networking, offering a place to meet others who hold similar values and a place to seek help (spiritual and material) in times of need. Moreover, it can foster group cohesion and integration. Because religion can be central to many people's concept of themselves, sometimes there is an "in group" versus "out group" feeling toward other religions in our society or within a particular practice.
- Finally, religion promotes social control: It reinforces social norms such as appropriate styles of dress, following the law, and regulating sexual behaviour. According to Parsons, Religion provides guidelines for human action in terms of core values. The Ten Commandments for example provide a basis for many social norms.

However functionalists ignore the dysfunctions of religion like religious conflicts in the world.

- Conflict between Palestinian Muslims and Israeli Jews.
- Conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland
- Conflict between Hindus and Muslims and in India.

### **Religion and social change**

According to Engels sometimes religion is the only means of change because all other routes have been blocked. Change brought about by religion is also ignored by functionalists for example:-

- Early Christian sects opposed Roman rule and brought about change. Jesus Christ himself encouraged social change.
- In the 1960s and 1970s Latin America Roman priests used religion to free people from oppression by preaching liberation theology that criticised bourgeoisie.
- Reverend Martin Luther King and the Baptist church resisted oppression and segregation, bringing political and social rights for black people in 1960 America.
- In Iran Islamic fundamentalism played a part in the 1979 revolution.
- The Roman Catholic Church in Poland opposed the Communist state and supported the free trade and union Solidarity.
- In South Africa Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a prominent opponent of apartheid.

### **Conflict Theory**

- ▶ **Conflict theorists view religion as an institution that helps maintain patterns of social inequality. For example, the Vatican has a tremendous amount of wealth, while the average income of Catholic parishioners is small.**
  - ▶ According to this perspective, religion has been used to support the "divine right" of oppressive monarchs and to justify unequal social structures, like India's caste system.
  - ▶ Conflict theorists are critical of the way many religions promote the idea that one should be satisfied with existing circumstances because they are divinely ordained. This power dynamic has been used by Christian institutions for centuries to keep poor people poor, teaching them that they shouldn't be concerned with what they lack because their "true" reward (from a religious perspective) will come after death.
  - ▶ Conflict theorists also point out that those in power in a religion are often able to dictate practices, rituals, and beliefs through their interpretation of religious texts or via proclaimed direct communication from the divine.

### **Feminist theory**

- ▶ The feminist perspective is a conflict theory view that focuses specifically on gender inequality.
- ▶ Feminist theorists focus on gender inequality and promote leadership roles for women in religion.
- ▶ In terms of religion, feminist theorists assert that, although women are typically the ones to socialize children into a religion, they have traditionally held very few positions of power within religions.
- ▶ A few religions and religious denominations are more gender equal, but male dominance remains the norm of most.

### **Rational Choice Theory: Can Economic Theory Be Applied to Religion?**

- How do people decide which religion to follow, if any?
- How does one pick a church or decide which denomination "fits" best?
- ▶ Rational choice theory (RCT) is one way social scientists have attempted to explain these behaviours.
  - ▶ The theory proposes that: -
    - people are self-interested, though not necessarily selfish, and that
    - people make rational choices—choices that can reasonably be expected to maximize positive outcomes while minimizing negative outcomes.
- ▶ Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1988) first considered the use of RCT to explain some aspects of religious behaviour, with the assumption that there is a basic human need for religion in terms of
  - ▶ providing belief in a supernatural being,
  - ▶ a sense of meaning in life, and
  - ▶ Belief in life after death.
- ▶ Religious explanations of these concepts are presumed to be more satisfactory than scientific explanations, which may help to account for the continuation of strong religious connectedness in countries such as the United States, despite predictions of some competing theories for a great decline in religious affiliation due to modernization and religious pluralism.
  - Another assumption of RCT is that religious organizations can be viewed in terms of "costs" and "rewards."
    - Costs are not only monetary requirements, but also include the time, effort, and commitment demands of any particular religious' organization.
    - Rewards are the intangible benefits in terms of belief and satisfactory explanations about life, death, and the supernatural, as well as social rewards from membership.
      - RCT proposes that, in a pluralistic society with many religious options, religious organizations will compete for members, and people will choose between different churches or denominations in much the same way they select other consumer goods, balancing costs and rewards in a rational manner.
- ▶ In this framework, RCT also explains the development and decline of churches, denominations, sects, and even cults; this limited part of the very complex RCT theory is the only aspect well supported by research data.
  - Critics of RCT argue that it doesn't fit well with human spiritual needs, and many sociologists disagree that the costs and rewards of religion can even be meaningfully measured or that individuals use a rational balancing process regarding religious affiliation. The theory doesn't address many aspects of religion that individuals may consider essential (such as faith) and further fails to account for agnostics and atheists who don't seem to have a similar need for religious explanations.
  - Critics also believe this theory overuses economic terminology and structure, and point out that, terms such as "rational" and "reward" are unacceptably defined by their use; they would argue that the theory is based on faulty logic and lacks external, empirical support. A scientific explanation for *why* something occurs can't reasonably be supported by the fact that it *does* occur. RCT is widely used in economics and to a lesser extent in criminal justice, but the application of RCT in explaining the religious beliefs and behaviours of people and societies is still being debated in sociology today.

### Symbolic Interactionism

**Rising from the concept that our world is socially constructed, symbolic interactionism studies the symbols and interactions of everyday life.**

- ▶ To interactionists, beliefs and experiences are not sacred unless individuals in a society regard them as sacred.
  - ▶ The Star of David in Judaism,
  - ▶ the cross in Christianity, and
  - ▶ the crescent and star in Islam
 are examples of sacred symbols.
- ▶ Interactionists are interested in what these symbols communicate.

## World Religions

The major religions of the world

- ✿ Hinduism,
- ✿ Buddhism,
- ✿ Islam,
- ✿ Confucianism,
- ✿ Christianity,
- ✿ Taoism, and
- ✿ Judaism

Differ in many respects, including

- ✿ how each religion is organized and?
- ✿ the belief system each upholds.
- ✿ nature of belief in a higher power,
- ✿ the history of how the world and the religion began, and
- ✿ the use of sacred texts and objects.

## TYPES OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- ▶ Religions organize themselves—their institutions, practitioners, and structures—in a variety of fashions.
- ▶ Sociologists use different terms, like *ecclesia*, *denomination*, and *sect*, to define these types of organizations.
- ▶ Scholars are also aware that these definitions are not static.
- ▶ Most religions transition through different organizational phases. For example, Christianity began as a cult, transformed into a sect, and today exists as an *ecclesia*.

## Cults

- ▶ like sects, are new religious groups.
- ▶ almost all religions began as cults and gradually progressed to levels of greater size and organization.
- ▶ The term cult is sometimes used interchangeably with the term new religious movement (NRM).
- ▶ these groups are often disparaged as being secretive, highly controlling of members' lives, and dominated by a single, charismatic leader.
- ▶ Controversy exists over whether some groups are cults,
- ▶ Some groups that are controversially labelled as cults today include the Church of Scientology and the Hare Krishna movement.

## Sect

- ▶ Small and relatively new group that can grow into a denomination. Most of the well-known Christian denominations today began as sects. For example, the Methodists and Baptists protested against their parent Anglican Church in England, just as Henry VIII protested against the Catholic Church by forming the Anglican Church. From "protest" comes the term Protestant.
- ▶ ***Occasionally, a sect is breakaway group that may be in tension with larger society.***
  - ▶ Members reject the values of the world that surround them.
  - ▶ Sects are not connected to the state and may be in conflict with it.
  - ▶ Sects tend to believe that they possess a monopoly of religious truth.
  - ▶ Members may be expected to withdraw from life outside the sect thus deep commitment is demanded from members.
- ▶ They sometimes claim to be returning to "the fundamentals" or to contest the validity of a particular policy.
- ▶ Often a sect begins as an offshoot of a denomination, when a group of members believes they should separate from the larger group.
- ▶ Some sects dissolve without growing into denominations. Sociologists call these **established sects**.
- ▶ Established sects, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses fall halfway between sect and denomination on the ecclesia-cult continuum because they have a mixture of sect-like and denomination-like characteristics.
- ▶ Sects are associated with lower socio economic classes.
- ▶ Central authority often rests with a charismatic male leader whose special qualities persuade others to follow him.



## Denomination

- ▶ is a large, mainstream religious organization, but it does not claim to be official or state sponsored.
- ▶ Does not have universal appeal; not associated with highest socioeconomic classes.
- ▶ It is one religion among many. For example, Baptist, African Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist are all Christian denominations.
- ▶ Does not identify with the state and approves separation of the state and the church.
- ▶ Members generally accept the norms and values of society.
- ▶ Some social restrictions may be placed on members for example Methodists are discouraged from gambling and drinking.
- ▶ Denominations do not claim a monopoly of religious truth and are tolerant to other religions.
- ▶ Usually smaller than a church but still it's a formal organisation with a hierarchy of paid officials.

## Ecclesia, The Church

- ▶ In sociology, the term is used to refer to a religious group that almost all members of a society belong to.
- ▶ It is considered a nationally recognized, or official, religion that holds a guarded religious monopoly and is closely allied with state and secular powers. Zimbabwe does not have an ecclesia by this standard.
- ▶ Members are drawn from all classes in society though particularly associated with higher socioeconomic classes.
- ▶ Churches accept and support life in this world.
- ▶ Members do not have to demonstrate their faith to become members of a church.
- ▶ Church is formal organization with a hierarchy of paid officials.

**One way to remember these religious organizational terms is to think of cults, sects, denominations, and ecclesia representing a continuum, with increasing influence on society, where cults are least influential and ecclesia are most influential.**

## Types of Religions

One widely accepted categorization that helps people understand different belief systems considers what or who people worship (if anything). Using this method of classification, religions might fall into one of these basic categories, as shown below.

Religious Classification	What/ who is Divine	Example
polytheism	Multiple Gods	Ancient Greeks and Romans
monotheism	Single God	Judaism, Islam
Atheism	No beliefs	Atheism
Animism	Nonhuman beings (animals, plants, natural world)	Indigenous nature worship (Shinto)
Totemism	Human natural world connection	Ojibwa (Native America)

- ✿ It is also important to note that every society also has nonbelievers, such as atheists, who do not believe in a divine being or entity, and agnostics, who hold that ultimate reality (such as God) is unknowable.
- ✿ While typically not an organized group, atheists and agnostics represent a significant portion of the population.
- ✿ Being a nonbeliever in a divine entity does not mean the individual subscribes to no morality.
- ✿ Indeed, many Nobel Peace Prize winners and other great humanitarians over the centuries would have classified themselves as atheists or agnostics.

## The World's Religions

Religions have emerged and developed across the world. Some have been short-lived, while others have persisted and grown.

### Hinduism

- ▶ The oldest religion in the world, Hinduism originated in the Indus River Valley about 4,500 years ago in what is now modern-day northwest India and Pakistan.
- ▶ Hinduism is the third-largest of the world's religions.
- ▶ Hindus believe in a divine power that can manifest as different entities.

- Three main incarnations—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva
- Sometimes compared to the manifestations of the divine in the Christian Trinity.

- ▶ Multiple sacred texts, collectively called the Vedas, contain hymns and rituals from ancient India and are mostly written in Sanskrit.
- ▶ Hindus generally believe in a set of principles called dharma, which refer to one's duty in the world that corresponds with "right" actions. Hindus also believe in karma, or the notion that spiritual ramifications of one's actions are balanced cyclically in this life or a future life.

### Buddhism

- ▶ Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama around 500 B.C.E.
- ▶ Siddhartha was said to have given up a comfortable, upper-class life to follow one of poverty and spiritual devotion.
- ▶ At the age of 35, he famously meditated under a sacred fig tree and vowed not to rise before he achieved enlightenment (*bodhi*). After this experience, he became known as Buddha, or "enlightened one."
- ▶ Followers were drawn to Buddha's teachings and the practice of meditation, and he later established a monastic order.
- ▶ Buddha's teachings encourage Buddhists to lead a moral life by accepting the four Noble Truths:
  - 1) life is suffering,
  - 2) suffering arises from attachment to desires,
  - 3) suffering ceases when attachment to desires ceases, and
  - 4) freedom from suffering is possible by following the "middle way."
- ▶ The concept of "middle way" is central to Buddhist thinking, which encourages people to live in the present and to practice acceptance of others (Smith 1991).
- ▶ Buddhism also tends to deemphasize the role of a godhead, instead stressing the importance of personal responsibility (Craig 2002).

### Confucianism

- ▶ Confucianism was the official religion of China from 200 B.C.E. until it was officially abolished when communist leadership discouraged religious practice in 1949.
- ▶ The religion was developed by Kung Fu-Tzu (Confucius), who lived in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E.
- ▶ An extraordinary teacher, his lessons—which were about self-discipline, respect for authority and tradition, and *jen* (the kind treatment of every person)—were collected in a book called the *Analects*.
- ▶ Some religious scholars consider Confucianism more of a social system than a religion because it
  - ▶ Focuses on sharing wisdom about moral practices but doesn't involve any type of specific worship; nor does it have formal objects.
  - ▶ Its teachings were developed in context of problems of social anarchy and a near-complete deterioration of social cohesion. Dissatisfied with the social solutions put forth, Kung Fu-Tzu developed his own model of religious morality to help guide society (Smith 1991).

### Taoism

In Taoism, the purpose of life is inner peace and harmony. Tao is usually translated as "way" or "path." The founder of the religion is generally recognized to be a man named Laozi, who lived sometime in the sixth century B.C.E. in China.

- ▶ Taoist beliefs emphasize the virtues of compassion and moderation.
- ▶ The central concept of *Tao* can be understood to describe a spiritual reality, the order of the universe, or the way of modern life in harmony with the former two. The ying-yang symbol and the concept of polar forces are central Taoist ideas (Smith 1991).
- ▶ Some scholars have compared this Chinese tradition to its Confucian counterpart by saying that "whereas Confucianism is concerned with day-to-day rules of conduct, Taoism is concerned with a more spiritual level of being" (Feng and English 1972).

### Judaism

- ▶ After their Exodus from Egypt in the 13th century B.C.E., Jews, a nomadic society, became monotheistic, worshipping only one God.

- ▶ The Jews' covenant, or promise of a special relationship with Yahweh (God), is an important element of Judaism.
- ▶ Their sacred text is the Torah; which Christians also follow as the first five books of the Bible.
- ▶ Talmud refers to a collection of sacred Jewish oral interpretation of the Torah. Jews emphasize moral behaviour and action in this world as opposed to beliefs or personal salvation in the next world.

## Islam

- ▶ A monotheistic religion and it follows the teaching of the prophet Muhammad, born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 570 C.E.
- ▶ Muhammad is seen only as a prophet, not as a divine being, and he is believed to be the messenger of Allah (God), who is divine.
- ▶ The followers of Islam are called Muslims.
  - Islam means "peace" and "submission."
- ▶ The sacred text for Muslims is the Qur'an (or Koran).
  - As with Christianity's Old Testament, many of the Qur'an stories are shared with the Jewish faith.
- ▶ Divisions exist within Islam, but all Muslims are guided by five beliefs or practices, often called "pillars":
  1. Allah is the only god and Muhammad is his prophet,
  2. Daily prayer,
  3. Helping those in poverty,
  4. Fasting as a spiritual practice,
  5. Pilgrimage to the holy centre of Mecca.
    - One of the tenets of Muslim practice concerns journeying to the religion's most sacred place, Mecca.

## Christianity

- ▶ Today the largest religion in the world
- ▶ Christianity began 2,000 years ago in Palestine, with Jesus of Nazareth, a charismatic leader who taught his followers about *caritas* (charity) or treating others as you would like to be treated yourself.
- ▶ The sacred text for Christians is the Bible.
- ▶ While Jews, Christians, and Muslims share many of same historical religious stories, their beliefs verge.
  - In their shared sacred stories, it is suggested that the son of God—a messiah—will return to save God's followers.
    - ✳ While Christians believe that he already appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, Jews and Muslims disagree.
    - ✳ While Christians recognize Christ as an important historical figure, their traditions don't believe he's the son of God, and their faiths see the prophecy of the messiah's arrival as not yet fulfilled.
- ▶ Different Christian groups have variations among their sacred texts. For instance, Mormons, an established Christian sect, also use the Book of Mormon, which they believe details other parts of Christian doctrine and Jesus' life that aren't included in the Bible.
- ▶ Similarly, the Catholic Bible includes the Apocrypha, a collection that, while part of the 1611 King James translation, is no longer included in Protestant versions of the Bible.
- ▶ Although monotheistic, Christians often describe their god through three manifestations that they call the Holy Trinity:
  - i. the father (God),
  - ii. the son (Jesus), and
  - iii. the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit is a term Christians often use to describe religious experience, or how they feel the presence of the sacred in their lives.
- ▶ One foundation of Christian doctrine is the Ten Commandments, which decry acts considered sinful, including theft, murder, and adultery.



# **Secularisation**

## **Definition of secularisation:**

The process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance

Page 160 Many classical sociologists have argued that social change would lead to weakening or even disappearance of religion. Nineteenth century thought was that industrialization and the growth of science would lead to **secularization**. Classical sociologist Comte believed in the three stages of human development had an impact on religion; each stage being characterised by a different set of intellectual beliefs.

1. **Theological stage;** dominated by religious and superstitious beliefs where priests were the most important and respected.
2. **Metaphysical stage;** religious beliefs and superstition would be weakened, philosophy becomes more important in directing human behaviour.
3. **Positive stage;** characterized by the disappearance of religion and science alone would dominate human thinking and direct human behaviour.

## **Durkheim**

- Did not believe religion was doomed to disappear
- Saw something eternal in religion.
- **However saw it declining in social significance.**
- Division of labour in an industrialized society would see religion lose some of its importance as a force for integrating society.
- Durkheim saw education providing social solidarity rather than the religious ritual associated with simple societies.

## **Weber**

- Anticipated a progressive reduction in the importance of religion.
- Saw people acting more in terms of the rational pursuit of goals rather than emotions and in line with tradition.
- Weber saw rationalization eroding religious influence.

## **Marx**

- Did not believe that industrialization would herald the decline of religion but set in motion a chain of events that would eventually lead to its disappearance.
- Marx saw religion as legitimating inequality in class societies.
- Marx argued; capitalism would eventually be replaced by classless communism and religion would cease to have any social purpose.

## **Contemporary sociologists**

- Have followed classical thought.
- Argue that industrialization has indeed led to religion losing some of its importance.
- Bryan Wilson argues that secularization has indeed taken place.
- Bryan Wilson defines secularization as "the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance".

## **Secularization Debate**

The question of whether religion, religious thinking and religious institutions are diminishing in significance in society today is a hot debate within the contemporary sociology of religion and in society in general. It is known as the *secularization debate*.

## **What are the indicators of and evidence for secularization?**

Proponents of the secularization theory point to some observable trends indicating that secularization is actually taking place.

- Previously accepted religious symbols, doctrines, and institutions lose their prestige and importance.
- We live in greater conformity with the material world and no longer have much interest in the supernatural.
- Religion has become a private matter and no longer has much influence on other spheres of life.
- We are increasingly less committed to religious values and practices.
- Religion has become a 'leisure pursuit' rather than a significant public endeavor

### **Why is secularization taking place?**

According to the proponents of the secularization theory (e.g. Bryan Wilson, Steve Bruce), religion loses its social significance as a direct and inevitable result of three processes involved in modernization:

- *Rationalization*: a process whereby society is increasingly organized according to rational, 'means-to-ends', principles and procedures, in which religious concepts and values simply have no place
- *Differentiation* (social fragmentation): we live in societies with increasingly specialized institutions (the economy, education, health, politics, family, etc). Religion is no longer directly relevant to the operation of any of them and social system as a whole
- *Decline of community (societalisation)*: modern life is increasingly organised and regulated not within close-knit local communities, but on the societal level governed by state bureaucracies. Religion used to be at the heart of local community life, and it is irrelevant for society regulated by bureaucratic rules

### **Criticisms of the secularization theory**

Opponents usually cite the following evidence against secularisation

- Even though 'orthodox' religious beliefs have lost their appeal, the available evidence indicates that most people still hold religious beliefs
- Religion remains highly socially significant in lives of many social groups, most notably many ethnic minority and migrant groups (e.g. Muslims)
- Some religious movements have experienced considerable revival, in particular fundamentalist, Pentecostal groups, and New Religious Movements
- In many parts of the world religion is still prominent, e.g. in many sections of the Muslim world, Latin America, Africa, and some post-communist countries
- If modernization inevitably leads to secularisation, then why is religion such a big thing in the most modernized country in the world, i.e. the U.S.A?

### **EXPANSION ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST SECULARIZATION**

❖ These arguments are centered around the following themes:-

- Decline in the influence of religion in wider society
- Decline in religious belief/faith
- Increase in new religious movements/new age movements
- Decline in participation and attendance.

#### **1. Decline in the influence of religion in wider society**

- For
  - The church has lost its influence/power, and this has created disengaged power.
  - This process is called disengagement.
  - This is when previously the church would have the power to judge/employ/educate but this has become lost.
  - Thus the influence is mainly concerned with power- wealth/prestige
  - Churches can no longer be the centre for the community/ People no longer turn to a vicar because there is more involvement with wider society so will look towards a wider set of services.
  - Cultural diversity has led to beliefs not held as securely.
- Against
  - Martin argues that this decline in power shows a purer form of religion = not secularisation
  - Casonova, similarly, argues that religion is still an important feature in public life. For example, in the 80s, political conflicts between Jews and Muslims were linked to religion.
  - Parson argues that the church may have lost some of its functions, but it has specialised in other functions making it still have a distinct role/influence in society

- The church still remains a national institution, performing national functions. In Zimbabwe at political rallies and Government events churches are invited to solemnise.
- Religious services are still done in Zimbabwean Schools
- The emergence of religious political groups such as the Christian New Right has a powerful influence on political values, especially the Republican Party.

## 2. Decline in religious belief/faith

### • For

- People now believe less in spiritual concepts such as Heaven/Hell than in the past.
- Brierly believes there is an increase in non-believers, and agnostics
- Religion is also now used for non-religious purposes, and this shows secularisation. This is supported by Herberg who found people use religion to justify a life style decision, for example, marriage styles. They pick information that fits them.
- Bruce believes that religion has experienced internal secularisation. This is when the controversial religious ideals have been watered down, as people are not as 'sucked' in anymore. Thus, religious faith has changed
- Rationalisation today has weakened religious belief. This is because technological advances mean we have a lot more control, and less of a need to resort to supernatural beliefs. Look for example in causes of illness/disease.
- This has been supported by Weber, who sees religion as undergoing a process of 'desacrilisation'. This is when society is no longer charged with magic, and instead based on rational action (calculation and logic)

### • Against

- Martin believes that comparing beliefs of the past and beliefs of now is a dangerous ground. This is because secondary historical sources are to be used, but these are often difficult to interpret
- Bruce also believes that a lot of people still retain religious belief than attend religious worship. This is reflected in the statistic 70% of people retained religious belief in 2000.
- Roof and McKinerey argue against the idea of internal secularisation, as they believe this theory is out of data. Indeed, some groups combine religious belief with life style. For example, the Christian New Right campaigning against abortions.
- Bruce's theory of rationalisation can also be refuted by demonstrating how some things, such as life and death, cannot be explained by science and thus people DO turn to religion.

## 3. Increase in new religious movements/new age movements

### • For

- Berger believes the increase in other movements shows less belief of a traditional church
- Berger also believes that super natural belief can only continue in a sectarian form of society. This is because supernatural belief needs commitment, and for people to cut themselves off from wider society, and sects can provide this. As the sect is the only route to super natural belief, it supports the idea that there is secularisation in wider society
- Wilson also sees sects as a sign of secularisation. This is because, for Wilson, sects are a response to "a situation in which religious values have lost social pre-eminence.
- Wilson is particularly critical of newer religious movements, such as Krishna Consciousness. He believes that this sect are 'irrelevant' to society as they only promote 'hedonism', especially compared to the Methodist sect which provided new values and integration for the urban working class.
- Bruce also believes the membership in sects does not match to the loss in church attendance, and this shows secularisation. For example, active membership of Hare Krishna is around 10,000 but this is fewer than the number lost to the Christian Church per month.
- Bruce sees NAMS has another sign of secularisation, and this is for a number of reasons.
- For example, NAMS lack the cohesion and discipline of a sect to create radical change. They are also 'diffuse' religions, which promote individualism. This means picking and choosing what works for you and you can have 'opposing' views actually side by side. Because of this diversity of views,

there is little agreement or commitment, this undermines the devotion needed for a religious organisation to exist.

- It may actually be the mere presence of alternative forms of faith that undermine religion. This is because more plurality shows how faith is a matter of personal choice, and does not link to their membership in society. Surely this is a sign of secularisation. Diversity is also more widespread because of globalisation, and immigration.

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- Against

- Bruce's ideas could be refuted by arguing that if people are taking a trust in beliefs, surely this requires a sense of faith. This must be religious.
- Heelas supports this view by quoting statistics. 25% of people believe in reincarnation. 40% in a spirit. 72% in a sacred presence in nature.
- Heelas did find spiritual beliefs are significant, and found this through a study of Kendal in Cumbria.
- Heelas does indeed believe that NAMS are just a radical version of humanistic expression, and although it doesn't look like a traditional religion, it still is a form of spirituality. The spirituality however, is internal instead of external
- Greeley sees the grown of NRM's resacrilisation.

- 4. Decline in participation and attendance.

- For

- There is a drop in Church attendance, particularly in Anglican, Baptist and United Reformed Churches. In 2005, it was estimated that only 6.8% of the adult population attended church (Brierley).
- Even baptism has dropped. In 2000, it dropped from 73% to 35% (Bruce)
- If we compare with Victorian Era, there is a huge drop.

- Against

- However it could be argued that comparing attendance statistics over time is wrong, as in the Victorian Era, the reason people really attended Church was not religiosity, but to boost social status
- Similarly, one could point to the increase in attendance and participation in other faiths. For example, Membership of the Unification Church increased from 390 to 1000. Scientologists increased from 121,000 to 144,000.
- Also, it has been argued that fewer people go to church, but those that do, go more often.
- Also, religion could be said to change its worship in to a more privatised state.

### International Comparisons

- Secularisation may not be happening in the US, as participation is increasing there.
- Christianity has increased in Africa, Latin America and Asian.
- There is also a global increase in the number of Muslims
- However, we might have to question the validity of such statistics. This is because different criteria is used to measure membership of different religions. Also, US statistics are based on surveys, and people may lie in these.

### Ethnicity and secularisation

- Bruce acknowledges that ethnic groups may retain religiosity, but this isn't evidence against secularisation. It is because of social importance, and the fact religion can be a cultural defence
- Cultural defence is when communities are in conflict, and are in different religious groups. The religious identity acts as a way of asserting ethnic pride.
- It also acts as a cultural transition. This is when religion is used in events where people have to adjust their identity. For example, Asian and Afro Caribbean migrants can use their mosques, temples and churches as the centre of the community, and thus, use religious as a defence from racial problems
- This could be argued against by Brown. Brown believes that ethnic defence is a key function of religion in the modern world anyway.

## Income and secularisation

- Those with less income tend to be more religious
- This is supported by the statistics that people in the bottom bracket income are 17% more religious than those in top income groups.

## A challenge to the secularisation debate- Stark and Bainbridge

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- Stark and Bainbridge reject the secularisation theory and instead advocate the religious market theory
- They believe that the secularisation theory is Eurocentric, as it focuses mainly on Europe but ignores the rise in religion in America and the rest of the world.
- They also believe the past has been distorted, as there was apparently no golden age.
- They instead believe in the following two principles- Religion can help meet our human needs, and thus there is a constant need for some type of it. Also, it is in human nature to obtain rewards and thus, people will use a sense of rationality where they weigh up different options
- Thus, religion is not in decline because it acts as a compensator, as it provides supernatural rewards when tangible ones are unavailable
- Other movements such as communism lack the aspect of supernatural rewards to be a compensator. Religion is the only one.
- Stark and Bainbridge also put forward the cycle of religious decline. In this cycle, some religions may decline, but others grow in members. For example, Churches may decline but cults may increase. They consequently show through this theory that the secularisation theory is one sided- it only focuses on decline and not growth
- S & B are also religious market theorists in that they believe competition between different religions causes improvements in the religious 'goods' they are offering. If the church improves, they will not face a decline.
- S & B can be criticised:
  - **Bruce argues that statistics show how increasing diversity accompanies religious decline GLOBALLY**
  - **Bruce also believes they misrepresent the secularisation theory. It never actually claims a 'golden age', or that it is global**
  - **Research from Norris and Inglehart also contradicts S & B's theory. This is because they found that places with religious pluralism would have lower levels of religious participation**
  - **Beckford argues that this theory is unsociological. It doesn't explain why people are religious by assuming that it is part of human nature.**

## Conclusion

- It is evident that this is a heavily debated topic
- However, Glock and Stark believe that some researchers have not really defined religious and religiosity properly
- Martin and Keibel reinforce this point as they believe that the secularisation debate has not been proven as different writers have used the term differently, without a universal definition.

# TOPIC 6

## RESEARCH METHODS

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- Qualitative and quantitative research
- Steps in scientific research
- Research tools
- Choice of research methods
- Importance of sociological research in Zimbabwe
- Subjective and objective research in sociology

In their view of the world Sociologists question and analyse why things happen and if there is a way to stop a problem before it happens. They use several methods to claim to speak with about social life. There are different ways that human beings claim to acquire knowledge. Examples include the following: -

### Authority:

- Use of a Secondary source for information, it makes that source an authority in one's life. Parents, friends, the media, religious leaders, your professor, books, or web pages are all examples of secondary sources of information that some people trust for information.

### Experience:

- People often claim to have learned something through an experience, such as a car accident or using some type of drug.
- Some physical skills, such as water skiing or playing basketball, are acquired primarily through experience.
- On the other hand, some experiences are subjective and are not generalizable to all.

### Logic:

- Simple deduction is often used to distinguish truth from falsity and is the primary way of knowing used in philosophy.
- I might suggest that if I fall in a swimming pool full of water, I will get wet. If that premise is true and I fall in a swimming pool, you could deduce that I got wet.

### Tradition:

- Deciding what to do in the future by repeating what was done in the past, many people get satisfaction out of celebrating holidays the same way year after year.
- Rapid changes in modern societies make traditional knowledge less and less helpful in making good choices.

### Revelation:

- Some people claim to acquire knowledge believed to be valid by consulting religious texts and believing what is written in them, such as the Torah, the Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita, or the Book of Mormon.

- Others claim to receive revelations from a higher power in the form of voices or a general intuitive sense of what one should do or even dreams.

### Science:

- The scientific method combines the use of logic with *controlled* experience.
- By adopting a model of cause and effect, scientists produce knowledge that can explain certain phenomena and even predict various outcomes before they occur.
- ❖ These methods of claiming to know certain things are referred to as epistemologies.
- An **epistemology** is simply a way of knowing.
- **In Sociology, information gathered through science is privileged over all others.**
  - Information gathered using other epistemologies will be rejected if it is not supported by evidence gathered using the scientific method. Like the physical sciences (i.e. chemistry, physics, etc.), sociologists can be and often are interested in predicting outcomes. This approach to *doing science* is often termed positivism/empiricism.

### A. **POSITIVISM:** - this is the use of scientific method that makes use quantitative data

- ✱ Comte was confident that scientific knowledge about society could be accumulated and used to improve human existence so that society could be run rationally.
- ✱ Emile Durkheim advocated for a similar methodology as Comte however was not a Positivist and did not follow positivist rule that states that sociology should be confined to observable or directly measurable phenomena
- a) **Social facts:** - information collected should be about phenomena that can be objectively observed and classified.
  - i. **Comte:** - positivism should ignore the study of emotions, motives and feelings since they cannot be objectively measured.
  - ii. **Durkheim:** - to Durkheim phenomena such as belief system, customs and institutions of society (*he called them **social facts***) could be studied although they could not be directly observed or measured.
    - ▶ Durkheim saw social facts causing people to behave in certain ways.
- b) **Statistical Data:** - Positivism use statistical Data by observing set of social facts.
  - ▶ Durkheim collected Data on social facts such as the suicide rates and membership to different religions.
- c) **Correlations:** - a correlation is a tendency for two or more things to be found together and it may refer to the strength of the relationship between them.
  - ▶ Durkheim found an apparent correlation between a particular religion (Protestantism) and high rate of suicide.
- d) **Causation:** - search for causal connection.
  - ▶ If there is a strong correlation between 2 or more types of social phenomena, then a positive sociologist might suspect that one is causing the other.
- The positivist approach to social science seeks to explain and predict social phenomena, often employing a **quantitative** approach where aspects of social life are assigned numerical codes and subjected to in-depth analysis to expose tendencies often missed by a casual observer.
- This approach most often makes use of **deductive reasoning** whereby a theory and hypothesis is formed first then subjected to practical testing.
- Unlike the physical sciences, sociology (and other social sciences, like anthropology) also often seek simply to **understand** social phenomena. Max Weber labelled this approach Verstehen, which is German for understanding. This is a **qualitative sociology** which aims to understand a culture or phenomenon on its own terms rather than trying to develop a theory that allows for prediction.
- Qualitative sociologists more frequently use **inductive reasoning** where an investigator will take time to make repeated observations of the phenomena under study before a theory can be formulated. Max Weber came up with Interpretive sociology to gather qualitative information.

## **B. INTERPRETIVISM: - makes use of qualitative data.**

- The method emphasizes on the meanings and motives of actors.
- Sees sociology as different from natural sciences in that requires the understanding of meaningful behaviour by humans. This often requires the imagining of situations from another person's view point.
- According to interpretivism people do not simply react to external stimuli but interpret the meaning of stimuli before reacting. This calls for an understanding people's unobservable subjective states which cannot be reduced to statistical data and therefore makes use of qualitative data.

### **Weber on Social Action**

In the protestant ethic and spirit of Capitalism (1958) Weber tries to understand why Calvinist reinvested their money and became early Capitalist. Weber argued that in some circumstances religion can lead to social change. This is in spite of the fact that both Functionalists and Marxists emphasize the role of religion in promoting social integration and blocking change.

### **Symbolic interactionism**

**Herbert Blummer (1962)** argues that sociologists need to understand the view point of the people whose behaviour they are trying to understand. They cannot do this simply by statistical data. Interactionism therefore prefers methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation. This is in agreement with interpretivism.

- **Both quantitative and qualitative approaches employ a scientific method as they make observations and gather data, propose hypotheses, and test or refine their hypotheses in the formulation of theories.**
- ❖ **Sociologists use: -**
  - **Observations:** - to be scientific one should only study what one can observe. Studying emotions, feelings, meanings and motives is unscientific.
  - **Hypotheses:** - a prediction of what will be found which will then be tested.
  - **Deductions:** - theory and hypothesis formed first then tested.
  - **Inductions:** - observations are made first then theory is made.
    1. **to understand and ultimately develop explanations for social phenomena in the form of theories this qualifies sociology as science.**
    2. **to test predictions from these theories.**
- If a prediction turns out to be correct, the theory survives but if fails it is modified or discarded.
- The method is commonly taken as the underlying logic of scientific practice.

Science is essentially an extremely cautious means of building a supportable, evidenced understanding of our natural and social worlds.

### ❖ **Concept of Validity in research**

- Validity is **how truthful something is** and whether a piece of research has the ability to test or research what it set out to measure.
- The word validity mainly refers to the **data collection** and whether it is true. If a questionnaire, which was aimed at young girls was carried out the validity would look at the results and think how truthful they were.
  - The questionnaire might not have been answered by who it was aimed at so would not be truthful. So maybe as the researcher would need to choose a method that you know who is answering it (e.g. interview)



- The validity would also take into account that if the answers were not reliable it could be because the respondents did not understand the question, so the questions would need to be more clear.
- The validity would also look at whether the **research methods** actually measured what they claimed.
- If a piece of research is not **reliable** then it is unlikely to be **valid**.

☀ Qualitative Data is seen as offering more valid picture of social reality.

❖ **Concept of reliability:**

- Reliability in research terms is **whether the results in a research method are trustworthy and dependable**.
- If the same piece of research were carried out again the same results would be reproduced again no matter whoever was doing the research.
- In doing a piece of research **reliable data collection methods** need to be used to collect the information.
- Some methods of data collection are seen as more reliable than others.
  - For example, on a questionnaire people will often lie or not tell the truth (e.g. ticking the box to say how much you earn).
  - Whereas in an interview face-to-face people will tell the truth a lot more and say exactly how they feel, so the results will be more valid.

- ❖ Often when carrying out research, working with others will often help your work to become more valid and reliable.
- ❖ Using unreliable data collection can lead to validity problems with the data; this means that the data would be inaccurate.

☀ Quantitative methods are sometimes seen to be more reliable.

## Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

❖ **Qualitative research**

- Deals with data which aims to get personal views and opinions across.
- It looks into things in depth and quality is more important than quantity.
- It is text-based and data cannot be expressed as numbers.
- Primarily inductive process is used to formulate theory or hypotheses.
- More **subjective**: describes a problem or condition from the point of view of those experiencing it.
- Data that represent nominal scales such as gender, socio economic status, and religious preference are usually considered to be qualitative data.
- Makes use of unstructured or semi-structured response options as in in-depth interviews.
- No statistical tests are used for analysis
- Can be valid and reliable: largely depends on skill and rigor of the researcher.
- Less time is used on planning but more time is used on the analysis phase.
- Less generalizable.
- Qualitative methods include: -
  - **Focus groups**
  - **Participant observation.**
  - **Content analysis.**
  - **Historical comparison**
  - **In-depth interviews**
  - **Reviews of documents for types of themes**

### ❖ Quantitative research

- Designed to collect a lot data and then analyse it so that conclusions can be drawn. Research methods, which are classed as quantitative, include questionnaires.
- Method is number-based; can be quantified or expressed as a number. Looks at how many people think the same about something.
- Primarily **deductive** process used to test pre-specified concepts, constructs, and hypotheses that make up a theory.
- More **objective**: provides observed effects of a program on a problem or condition
- Examples of quantitative data are scores on achievement tests, number of hours of study, or weight of a subject.
- These data lend themselves to statistical manipulation.
- Less in-depth but more coverage of information across a large number of cases.
- Employs fixed response options.
- Statistical tests are used for analysis.
- Can be valid and reliable: largely depends on the measurement device or instrument used.
- More time used on planning while less time is used during analysis of results.
- More generalizable.
- Quantitative Methods include: -
  - **Surveys**
  - **structured interviews**
  - **observations**
  - **questionnaires**
  - **reviews of records documents for numeric information**
- ❖ Both qualitative and quantitative data are valid types of measurement, and both are used in education journals.
- ❖ Only quantitative data can be analysed statistically, and thus more rigorous assessments of the data are possible.

### The Difference between Primary and Secondary Sources of Data

- **Primary data** is data, which is collected by the researcher themselves it is new, original research information.
- Primary sources enable the researcher to get as close as possible to what actually happened and is hands on.
- A primary source reflects the individual viewpoint of a participant or observer, primary sources are first-hand information from a person who witnessed or participated in an event.
- Examples of primary data are:
  1. interview
  2. observation
  3. action research
  4. case studies
  5. life histories
  6. questionnaires
  7. ethnographic research

## 8. longitudinal studies

- **Secondary** research is uses information that has already been produced by other people.
- A secondary source is used by a person usually not present at the event and relying on primary source documents for information.
- **Secondary sources** usually analyse and interpret.
- Finding out about research that already exists will help form new research.
- Examples of secondary data:

1. Previous research
2. Official statistics
3. Mass media products (newspapers)
4. Diaries
5. Letters
6. Government reports
7. Web information (internet)
8. Historical data and information
9. Books/ Magazines

❖ Distinctions between primary and secondary sources can be ambiguous.

- An individual document may be a primary source in one context and a secondary source in another.
- Time is a defining element.
  - For example, a recent newspaper article is not usually a primary source; but a newspaper article from the 1860's may be a primary source for civil war research.

## DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUES

### 1. Questionnaires

- Questionnaires are simply lists of pre-written questions and sometimes also include scales.
  - These can either be sent to the respondent's home however this approach often has a low response rate as people see no reason to fill them in,
  - They can also be given to the person directly to be filled in there or then e.g. on the streets.
  - Questions may also be in the form of an interview where the researcher reads out the questions
- A researcher would often use a variety of questions so that they can try and get the best response from people in the questions used.
- Questionnaires can be used to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data:
  - Using more open questions (say how you really feel answers) produces qualitative data.
  - Using closed questions (fixed response answers) produce quantitative data.
- Questionnaires are used to reach a large number of people because the forms can just

be handed out and are not as time consuming or expensive as interviews would be.

- ~ The weakness is that accuracy cannot be attained because people do not have the chance to express themselves like they would in an interview so may just end up ticking a box that they don't agree with because there are no other options.

## Page 71 Advantages of questionnaires

- Practical method of gathering data.
- Every question is the same so it is easy to see patterns and make comparisons between different groups of people such as their age or between what jobs they have.
- If the sampling is successful, you can sometimes make general statements about the whole population rather than about the group of people who took part in the questionnaire.
- No interviewer bias is involved because there is no interviewer present.
- Quick and cheap to conduct compared to other methods as large amounts of information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way and also fixed response questions mean that answers can be quickly and accurately analysed on the computer.
- Can be carried out by the researcher or by any number of people with limited effect to its validity and reliability
- Can be analysed more 'scientifically' and objectively than other forms of research

## Disadvantages of questionnaire

- Analysing the results on a large scale might be very time consuming and could be out of date when the results are ready.
- Statistics give no indication of how the person feels and could not be accurate because it could not be how the person truly feels.
- The statistics give no individual meaning or interpretation.
- People may not understand the question or think it has a different meaning and interpret it in totally different ways. Method is also argued to be inadequate to understand some forms of information - i.e. changes of emotions, behaviour, feelings etc.
- People may read differently into each question and therefore reply based on their own interpretation of the question - i.e. what is 'good' to someone may be 'poor' to someone else, therefore there is a level of subjectivity that is not acknowledged.
  - This makes comparison of answers difficult if groups have common interpretation.
- Lying is also a danger.
  - Difficult to check whether people are lying or not and also there is no way of telling how much thought a respondent has put in.
- If the response rate is low or the sampling is less random, the overall findings will be less reliable.
- Lacks validity
- There is a level of researcher imposition, meaning that when developing the questionnaire, the researcher is making their own decisions and assumptions as to what

is and is not important...therefore they may be missing something that is of importance.

## 2. In-depth interviews

- Interviews are very similar to questionnaires as they are organised around a series of questions that the interviewee can respond. Although interviews are longer and winded than questionnaires.
- They are more personal than questionnaires and are able to collect more detailed information.
- Interviews usually take place face-to-face and one-to-one which enables the interviewer to gain information on a more sensitive subject.
- Interviews need to be carried out really carefully by the interviewer and require good communication skills.
- They are much harder work than questionnaires, as they can be very time consuming.
- Interviews can be open-ended, structured or semi-structured.
  - Structured: Questions asked require a certain answer and thus responses can be quantified (Quantitative).
  - Open-ended: Don't have a format, so the interviewee can express their feelings (Qualitative).
  - Semi-structured: Are half way in-between both structured and open ended.
  - During an interview it is best to use a bit of both to get a variety.

### Advantages of in-depth interviews

- Good interaction can often develop between the interviewer and interviewee; this means that honest and trustworthy answers are produced. This is really important when the subject is considered sensitive or personal.
- In interviews you are able to understand how they really feel and can speak for themselves. Also interviews are able to get closer to their experiences.
- The information is not already known by the questions set, this means the interviewer can focus on specific information.
- People's feelings can be explored rather than just collecting specific information.
- A tape recorder can be used, which means that the information can be referred back to when analysing the data.
- The results depend on how skilful the interviewer is.

### Disadvantages of in-depth interviews

- The interviewer can be very biased; the three main problems are:
  - a. The interviewer can often give clues like frowning that could influence them.
  - b. The interviewer could follow up information they believe is more relevant. Or
  - c. If there was more than one interviewer than it could mean that there was more than one bias.
- Interviews are very time consuming and expensive so not as many can take place.
- Each interview is different so it means producing statistics or general results can be difficult.
- The sample can be biased if someone refused to be interviewed.
- People can often change their mind on a topic once the interview has started and they

may change their behaviour.

- Sometimes people ask questions back, the interviewer must not answer the questions as it can change people's minds or opinions on a subject.

#### **4. Observation techniques**

##### **a. Direct observation**

- Direct observation is also known as overt which means that it is obvious and the observation is not hidden as everyone knows that they are there watching, and identifies the reason why they are watching.
- Direct observation is when you study what people do and how they behave by watching them in their everyday life.
- The observer would observe from a distance and will not become involved in what the group is doing. As with other techniques the data collected has to be recorded in a certain way so that the relevant information is collected, the main way of collecting information is to take notes.
- In direct observation the subjects (e.g. children) would go about their normal life (e.g. in a playgroup) whilst being observed.
- Observing how people live and behave in their natural settings can give the researcher a lot of information about the subject's life and why they are who they are.
- Direct observation is the best way to look at the interactions people have especially with children as interviews or questionnaires would not work.

##### **Advantages of Direct observation**

- The observers can see what the people actually do rather than being told in a questionnaire or an interview.
- The subjects are studied in their natural environment so should act themselves more.
- The observer is able to detect behaviour that the subjects are unaware of doing, so would not mention it as they believed it as normal.
- In direct observation you are able to look at group behaviour and how they interact with each other. This could be the only method of finding out information about young children as they could not fill in questionnaires or take part in an interview.

##### **Disadvantages of Direct observation**

- The observer may miss important information while they are note taking about other information.
- Negative observations about what is happening can lead to ethical problems.
- If the observer cannot control himself or herself over the sample being observed this can limit broader application of research in the future.
- Inferences drawn from observed behaviour can lead to misunderstandings and therefore is a poor way to look at values and beliefs.
- The reliability of observational data collection methods is relatively low because observations are often personal and non-repeatable.

##### **b. Participant observation**

- In participant observation the researcher would enter a group or situation that they were going to study, and try to get to know the group of people or the

situation from their point of view and join in with what they do.

- During participant observation the researcher would try to understand the motives and meanings of the person they were studying, they are trying to gain a deeper understanding of the person's life, their beliefs, and activities of the group and where and how they live.
- It is a good way to find new information which may not have been found doing questionnaires or interviews.
- During participant observation the researcher may become too attached to the people that they are studying and the data could become invalid as the researcher could be seeing things in a different point of view, so using interviews or questionnaires alongside this research method is advised.
- This research method is very time consuming as to collect valid information, as the group would need to be studied for a long time.
- This research method is often used to find out hidden information on a hostile group like the police to find out hidden data. There is a risk of doing this because the group would not appreciate someone who they think was their friend and whom they trusted was secretly gathering information about their activities.

#### **Advantages of Participant observation**

- Observations in the group's natural settings can produce very high valid data, because they are being themselves.
- The data collected can be very useful and may give access to data that could have been hidden away otherwise.
- The data can be observed over a long period of time so can be more accurate and reliable.
- Participant observation may be the only way of accessing information on more hostile groups that would not normally let you observe them.
- During the research the researchers can decide what is important and what is not as it unfolds, and so do not have to decide what they are looking for at the beginning of the study

#### **Disadvantages of Participant observation**

- Researchers may not help but start to get involved in the group, and could influence them in what they do.
- Participant observers may never really understand the group or their setting so may not be able to appreciate the meanings they have.
- Studying groups on a small scale doesn't mean it can be a representation of any other social groups because everyone is different.
- Observations can sometimes have ethical problems if say there was no consent obtained when the observation was being carried out.
- The reliability of observational data collection methods is low because observations are often too personal and non-repeatable

### **5. Case study**

- A form of qualitative descriptive research that is used to look at individuals, a small group of participants, or a group as a whole.
  - Case studies are analysis of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods.
  - An empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context.

## Case Study Methods

### ➤ Prospective:

- A type of case study in which an individual or group of people is observed in order to determine outcomes.
  - For example, a group of individuals might be watched over an extended period of time to observe the progression of a particular disease.

### ➤ Retrospective:

- A type of case study that involves looking at historical information.
  - For example, researchers might start with an outcome, such as a disease, and then backwards at information about the individuals life to determine risk factors that may have contributed to the onset of the illness.

## *Sources of Information Used in a Case Study*

The six major sources that have been identified by researchers (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995) are:

1. **Interviews:** One of the most important methods for gathering information in case studies. An interview can involve structured survey-type questions, or more open-ended questions.
2. **Documents:** Letters, newspaper articles, administrative records, etc.
3. **Archival records:** Census records, survey records, name lists, etc.
4. **Physical artefacts:** Tools, objects, instruments and other artefacts often observed during a direct observation of the subject.
5. **Participant observation:** Involves the researcher actually serving as a participant in events and observing the actions and outcomes.
6. **Direct observation:** This strategy involves observing the subject, often in a natural setting. While an individual observer is sometimes used, it is more common to utilize a group of observers.
  - Researchers collect data about participants using participant and direct observations, interviews, protocols, tests, examinations of records, and collections of writing samples.
  - An example of case study is ethnography which is commonly found in communication case studies.
    - Ethnography is the description, interpretation, and analysis of a culture or social group, through field research in the natural environment of the group being studied.
  - The main method of ethnographic research is through observation where the researcher observes the participants over an extended period of time within the participants own environment.

### 6. Longitudinal Studies

- A longitudinal study is an observational study which involves repeated observations over long periods of time, sometimes even decades.
- Longitudinal studies are often used in Sociology to observe changes in life times or through generations.
- Longitudinal studies can also be used to study change in the lives of organisations and institutions as well as individual people.
- A longitudinal study is a correlation research study that involves observations of the same items over long periods of time.
- In sociology it's often used to study developmental trends across the life span.



- The reason for this is that longitudinal studies track the same people, and therefore the differences observed in those people are less likely to be the result of cultural differences across generations.
- A large number of variables is often examined because the researchers are unsure what data may prove to be important or required later in the research; although the researcher still has to decide what variables to study, examination of so many limits the extent to which they impose their own theories on the research.
- Unlike cross sectional studies, which look at different people, longitudinal studies look at the same person for a long period of time, this could mean that they are less likely to be the result of cultural differences throughout generations, because of this, it means that people can track the changes easily if there are any made.
  - Because many longitudinal studies are observational, it means that it cannot be strongly manipulated. However, it has been argued that there is less power to detect casual relationships.

There are a number of different types of longitudinal studies, including:

1. Individual studies, when individuals are tracked and studied.
2. Household panel surveys, when individuals are followed and observed within their household and information is collected.
3. Cohort studies, when people from certain age groups are studied to explore their different trajectories as they age.
4. Record linkage studies, administrative or census data are linked across time.

**Advantages of longitudinal studies are:**

1. High in validity - people usually do not remember past events and if they were asked about their past, they would not remember.
2. Picking up long-term changes

**Disadvantages of longitudinal studies are:**

1. It takes a long period of time to gather results
2. A need to have a large sample size and accurate sampling to reach representativeness
3. Participant may drop out; this is called subject attrition.

**Ethics in Sociological Research**

- Ethical considerations are of particular importance to sociologists because they investigate people. A researcher must therefore remain mindful of her or his ethical responsibilities to participants.
- Because ethical considerations are of so much importance, sociologists adhere to a rigorous set of ethical guidelines.
- The most important ethical consideration of sociological research is that participants in sociological investigation are not harmed.
  - A researcher's primary duty is therefore to protect the welfare of the subjects. For example, a researcher whose study requires extensive questioning of volunteers' personal information should screen the subjects beforehand to assure that the questioning will not distress them.
- There are several universally recognized considerations. For instance;
  - Research on children and youth always requires **parental consent**.

- Research on adults also requires informed consent and participants are never forced to participate. Agreeing to participate in a study based on disclosure of research information constitutes **informed consent**.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are two additional practices that ensure the safety of participants when sensitive information is provided (e.g., sexuality, income, etc.).

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- A researcher should also **inform subjects about their expected roles in the study, the potential risks of participating, and their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences**.
- **Debriefing**: After the study is finished, the researcher should provide subjects with complete details about the study. This is called **debriefing**.
- Many **critics** believe that deception is unacceptable when doing research. (*Concealing the purpose and procedures of a study from participants*).
  - Deception carries the risk of psychologically harming subjects.
  - It reduces the general public's support for research.
- **Proponents**, however, view deception as necessary when prior knowledge of a study would sway a subject's responses and invalidate the results as in the Hawthorne or observer effect. If subjects learn that a study measures attitudes of racial discrimination, they may intentionally try to avoid appearing prejudiced as research subjects tend to undergo behavioral changes as a result of being aware of their participation in an experiment. Examples of such changes include:
  - **The Hawthorne Effect or Observer effect** - Subjects perform better when they know they are being observed are in an experiment
  - **Demand Characteristics** - Subjects try to give the answer that they think is "correct" rather than the honest answer
  - **Placebo Effect**- Subjects respond to the *belief* that they are receiving a drug, regardless of whether they actually are or not
- ✱ Even the most ethical and cautious researcher cannot anticipate every risk associated with participating in a study. But by carefully screening subjects, informing subjects of their rights, giving them as much information as possible before the study, avoiding deception, and debriefing following the study, the researcher can at least minimize the risks of harm to the subjects.

## THE HAWTHORNE EFFECT

It is the process where human subjects of an experiment change their behaviour, simply because they are being studied. This is one of the hardest inbuilt biases to eliminate or factor into the design.

### **The History of the Hawthorne Effect**

The name is of a place where the effect was first encountered. In 1955, the researcher, Henry A. Landsberger, performed a study and analysis of data from experiments performed between 1924 and 1932, by Elton Mayo, at the Hawthorne Works near Chicago. The company had commissioned studies to determine if the level of light within their building affected the productivity of the workers. Mayo found that: -

- the level of light made no difference in the productivity, as the workers increased output whenever the amount of light was switched from a low level to a high level, or vice versa.

- He noticed that this effect occurred when any [variable was manipulated](#), and postulated that it happened because the workers automatically changed their behaviour. They increased output, simply because they were aware that they were under [observation](#).
- The logical conclusion was that the workers felt important because they were pleased to be singled out, and increased productivity as a result. Being singled out was the factor dictating increased productivity, not the changing lighting levels, or any of the other factors that they experimented upon.

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## |78 The Hawthorne Effect and Modern Day Research

- Many types of research use [human research subjects](#), and the [Hawthorne effect](#) is an unavoidable [bias](#) that the researcher must try to take into account when they analyse the results.
- Subjects are always liable to modify behaviour when they are aware that they are part of an experiment, and this is extremely difficult to quantify. All that a researcher can do is attempt to factor the effect into the research design, a tough proposition (*difficult to do*), and one that makes social research a matter of experience and judgment.

## The Classical Experiment

The most customary experiment consists of three main parts:

1. Independent and Dependent Variables
2. Pre-testing and Post-testing
3. Experimental Control Groups

### Independent and Dependent Variables

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- a. **Independent variable-** A manipulated variable, in an experiment or study, whose presence or degree incurs a change in the dependent variable
- b. **Dependent Variable-** The variable being studied in the experiment; it is expected to change when the independent variable is changed.
  - Thus, a typical experiment will examine the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable.
  - the independent variable will usually be the "experimental stimulus."
  - it can also be described as a dichotomous variable
    - having two characteristics -present or non-present
  - the independent and dependent variable must be limitless.
    - a variable may be the independent variable in one study but serve as a dependent variable in another experiment.
  - it is very helpful and important to define the independent and dependent variables in your research, and this should be done at the beginning of any experiment.
- c. **Pretesting and Post-testing**
  - **Pre-testing-** the initial measurement of a dependent variable among subject.
  - **Post-testing-** the re-measurement of a dependent variable among subjects, after they have been introduced to the independent variable.
  - once pre-testing and post-testing are conducted, any deviations between the first and final measurements are then stated as characteristics of the independent variable.

### Experimental and Control Groups

**Experimental Group-** a collection of subjects to whom the independent variable is administered.

**Control Group-** a collection of subjects that do not receive the independent variable but should act as (mimic) the experimental group.

The comparison of both groups at the conclusion of the experiment will point out the effects that the independent variable has had.

- when doing experimental research, it is very important to observe the experimental and control groups very closely.
- using a control group helps a researcher observe changes in the experiment due to the independent variable, by making such changes seem more obvious.

### The Double-Blind Experiment

Double-Blind experiment- an experimental design in which the researchers are ignorant to which groups are experimental or control.

- using a double-blind experiment reduces biases of results from researchers.
  - If you know which group is the experimental group you may pay more attention to that group, potentially to the extent that you ignore the control group entirely.
  - This will cause a problem at the end of the experiment, because you will not be able to witness or analyze the full effects that the independent variable has had.

- *Pgymalion Effect*- people perform better when more is expected of them

## Selecting Subjects

- For example, college students are frequently used in experiments. While they are a relatively easy group to access and analyze, one issue of concern is their generisability: given that college students are such an enormously diverse group, is it sensible to make generalizations about them?
  - This question points out a potential drawback to using such large and heterogeneous groups as college students.
- Probability sampling, randomization, and matching are methods of attaining comparability between the experimental and control groups.
- Randomization is the preferred method.
- However, randomization and matching may be used together.

## Probability Sampling

- one begins with a sampling constant containing the entire population involved in the study. Then the researcher selects two samples that will be copies of each other.
- the degree of resemblance (representativeness) will be a product of the sample size.
- this type of sampling is seldom used in any experiment.

**Randomization**- a process for selecting people to be in a control or experimental group. Randomization is preferable because it limits the potential bias (systemic error) in the experiment, as it provides an equal likelihood that "good" and "poor" performers will be in the experimental group. However, there is still a chance that more of one category may end up in a given group. The best way to overcome this is a large sample size; hence, randomization is ideal when the population is very big.

-there are several ways of randomly selecting people for a control or experimental group; for example:

- 1) Out of a sample of 1600, you can select every 8th person for each group. (selection rate of 1/8)
- 2) Out of a sample of 100 you can select every other person to be in each group. (selection rate of 1/2; a higher rate yields a better likelihood for authenticity, and you can afford a higher rate when the sample size is small)
  - Regardless of the way that the researcher decides to place subjects into each group, this process must be done in a fair and equal manner, because each sample will be a reflection of the total population's characteristics.

## Matching

**Matching**- a process in which subjects are paired based on the similarities of one or more variables. One member of the pair is assigned to the experimental group while the other is assigned to a control group.

- matching is a way to compare the experimental and control groups.
- matching is more efficient if a quota matrix is constructed for all of the **relevant characteristics**.

**Relevant characteristics** - attributes that are related to the dependent variable.

- the overall average description of the experimental and control group should be the same.
- As a rule of thumb, both the control and experimental groups should have the same ages, gender and racial composition, etc.

## Validity in Experimental Design

- **Internal Validity:** the ability to eliminate alternative explanations of a treatment effect (*i.e., a combination of validity and reliability issues*). Internal validity represents the possibility that conclusions drawn from experimental results may not accurately reflect what happened in the experiment itself.
- **External Validity:** the ability to generalize experimental findings to events and settings outside the experiment itself. External validity represents the possibility that conclusions drawn from experimental results may not be generalizable to the real world.

### Strengths of Experimental Method:

- Isolation of experimental variable's impact over time
- Replication is possible

### Weaknesses of Experimental Method:

- Artificiality of laboratory setting
- Cost
- Ethics are violated

**Ethics and Experiments** as with other methods for conducting social research, there are ethical considerations to take into account when creating and carrying out an experiment.

- experiments involve misleading subjects
- experiments may potentially cause harm to individuals
  - Deception should only be used if it is necessary for the purposes of the research; that is: -
    - it must be confirmed that there is no way of getting around the use of deception.
    - Additionally, deception should only be used when the potential benefits of the research outweigh the risks of deceiving subjects.
    - Using deception is considered an ethical violation, so its use must be essential, and the research in which it is used must have the potential for valuable, implicative findings.
  - If it is necessary that the experiment is intrusive in some way in the **participants'** lives, considerations should be made so that they **will not be physically or psychologically damaged**.
  - The potential value should, again, outweigh the possible risks of such intrusion in experiments.

### 🌟 Steps of the research process

- Scientific research involves a systematic process that focuses on being objective and gathering a multitude of information for analysis so that conclusions can be reached.
- In this process, the study is documented in such a way that another individual can conduct the same study again. This is referred to as replicating the study.
- Any research done without documenting the study so that others can review the process and results is not an investigation using the scientific research process.
- The scientific research process is a multiple-step process where the steps are interlinked with the other steps in the process.
- If changes are made in one step of the process, the researcher must review all the other steps to ensure that the changes are reflected throughout the process.

#### 1. Define the topic/problem:

- The first step in the process is to **identify a problem** or develop a research question.

- Identify your topic of interest and develop a research question in the form of a cause-and-effect relationship.
- The research problem may be something the agency identifies as a problem for example childhood obesity, which is a local problem and concern within the community.
- This will serve as the focus of the study.

## 2. Conduct a review of the literature:

- Access studies that have already been performed by other researchers and published in peer-reviewed journals. You'll find out what is already known about the topic and where more research is needed.
- This **provides foundational** knowledge about the problem area.
- Literature review also **educates the researcher** about what studies have been conducted in the past, how these studies were conducted, and the conclusions in the problem area.

## 3. Formulate a hypothesis:

- Refine your research question in a way that will add new information to the existing research literature, expressing it in the form of a testable research assumption.
- This includes identifying two or more variables and articulating how one variable is thought to influence the other.

## 4. Design the research: The plan for the study is referred to as the instrumentation plan.

- This plan serves as the road map for the entire study, specifying
  - who will participate in the study;
  - how,
  - when, and
  - where data will be collected; and
  - the content of the program
- The researcher develops the plan for the research program, indicating
  - what data will be collected,
  - when: - Some designs include data collection at only one point in time, but more complex questions require data gathering over time and with different groups of people.
  - how the data will be collected: -, Decide on a way to approach data collection that will provide a meaningful test of the research hypothesis.
  - who will collect the data,?
  - How the data will be analysed?
- The instrumentation plan specifies all the steps that must be completed for the study. This ensures that the programmer has carefully thought through all these decisions and that she provides a step-by-step plan to be followed in the study.
- Once a design has been established, one or more actual data gathering strategies will need to be identified.
- Each method comes with its own strengths and weaknesses, so sociologists are increasingly incorporating mixed-methods approaches in their research designs to enrich their knowledge of the topic.
- Some of the more popular research methods used by sociologists are: Surveys or Interviews, Experiments, Unobtrusive measures, and Participant Observation or Field Research
- **Operationalize variables:** for example, in survey research, this means deciding



on the exact wording of the question or questions used to measure each variable, a listing of all possible responses to closed-ended questions, and a decision as to how to calculate variables using multiple indicators.

**5. Identify the population and draw a sample:**

- A population is the group a researcher is interested in learning about.
- The study cannot possibly include the entire population. so a smaller group is used to represent the population (a sample).
- Samples that use principles of random selection, where every unit in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample, have the best chance of reflecting the views and behaviours of the entire population of focus.

**6. Collect data (Data collection)**

Data collection must be systematic and rigorous so that practical mistakes do not create artificial results. Information collected is needed to answer research questions.

- Once the instrumentation plan is completed, the actual study begins with the collection of data.
- Every study includes the collection of some type of data—whether it is from the literature or from subjects—to answer the research question.
- Data can be collected in the form of words on a survey, with a questionnaire, through observations, or from the literature e.g. Researchers will be collecting data on the defined variables such as weight, percentage of body fat, cholesterol levels, and the number of days the person walked a total of 10,000 steps during the class.

**7. Analyse the results:**

- The researcher finally has data to analyse so that the research question can be answered.
- In the instrumentation plan, the researcher specified how the data will be analysed.
- The researcher now analyses the data according to the plan.
- The results of this analysis are then reviewed and summarized in a manner directly related to the research questions.
- Powerful statistical packages today make data analysis easier than it has ever been.

**8. Reporting the Results: Research results are shared with the larger community through presentations, reports, and publications in peer-reviewed journals. This allows others to consider the findings, the methods used, and any limitations of the study.**

## TOPIC 7

# EDUCATION

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### Theories of Education

### Educational policies in Zimbabwe

### Educational achievement

### Global trends in Education

## WHAT IS EDUCATION ?

Education is an agent of socialization which involves the acquisition of knowledge and learning skills. This takes place either intentionally or unintentionally. Education is responsible for shaping beliefs and moral values. In non-literate societies education happened informally as young ones imitated what the adults did e.g. hunting and gathering fruit and vegetables. Specialized educational institutions gradually developed (especially in complex pre-industrial societies). With industrialization formal education for the masses was provided.

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

### A. Functionalism and the New Right

#### 1. Functionalist theories of education

Functionalism is a consensus theory which sees society as being essentially harmonious. It argues that:

- Society has basic needs, including the need for social order. To survive, society needs social solidarity through everyone sharing the same norms and values. Otherwise, society would fall apart.
- Social institutions such as education perform positive functions for both society and for individuals, by socializing new members of society and by helping create and sustain social solidarity.
- Functionalism is a conservative view of society. Functionalists tend to focus on the positive contribution education makes to society.

Functionalists ask two key questions about education:

- i. What are the functions of education for society as a whole?
- ii. What are the functional relationships between education and other parts of the social system?

#### a. DURKHEIM - Education and Solidarity

- ▶ Durkheim identifies two main functions of the education system:
  - creating social solidarity
  - teaching specialist skills

#### i. Social solidarity

Durkheim saw the major function of education as the transmission of society's norms and values from one generation to the next.

- ~ This is necessary in order to produce **social solidarity**. This is where individual members of society feel that they belong to a community that is much bigger than they are.
- ~ To Durkheim commitment to society, a sense of belonging and a feeling that the social unit is more important than the individual, help to create social solidarity.
  - ▶ Durkheim argued, to become attached to society, the child must feel in it something that is real, alive and powerful, which dominates the person and to which one also owe the best part of one.
  - ▶ Education provides this link between the individual and society. (history in particular develops a sense of commitment to the social group).
    - Shared language in school (English)
    - History of founding fathers (Kaguvi, Chaminuka Mbuya Nehanda, Chitepo etc.)
    - National flag
    - Prayers
    - National school pledge.
- ~ **The school is a society in miniature:** - the school is a model of the social system allowing pupils to live with others who are not their kins and who they cannot choose but just meet. In school the child learns to interact with other members of the school community and to follow a fixed set of rules. This experience prepares the child for interacting with members of society as an adult and accepting social rules.
- ~ **Education and social rules:** - to Durkheim social rules should be strictly enforced. Punishment reflecting the seriousness of the damage done to the social grouping by the offence. Those breaking rules should know why they are being punished.
  - ▶ Pupils would thus learn to exercise self-discipline not to avoid punishment but also because they see that misbehaviors damage society as a whole. Durkheim stated that it is by respecting school rules that the child learns to respect rules in general, that he develops the habit of self-control and restrain himself .....

## ii. **Education and division of labor: - Teaching specialist skills**

- Durkheim argues that individuals must be taught specialist skills so that they can take their place within a highly complex division of labor in which people have to co-operate to produce items. This is important especially in industrial societies where social solidarity is largely based on the interdependence of specialized skills. Economists, doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers etc. these all need each other at some point in life.

## **Criticisms of Durkheim**

- Norms and values transmitted by education are assumed to be those of society rather than those of the ruling class.
  - ▶ Marxists argue that educational institutions tend to transmit a dominant culture which serves the interest of the ruling class rather than those of society as a whole.
- Education is not always successful in transmitting shared values, promoting self-discipline or cementing social solidarity.
  - ▶ Studies by Willis and Hargreaves, for example, show that the transmission of norms and values is not always successful. Some students openly reject the values of the school and form anti-school sub-cultures. Willis's lads openly embraced values which were the opposite to those of the school and conformist students.

## **b. PARSONS - Education and Universalistic values**

Parsons argues that school performs two major functions for society:

- i. Through the process of socialization, **education acts as a bridge between the family and wider society.**
  - In the family, children are judged according to particularistic standards that apply only to them. Their status within the family is also ascribed.

- In wider society, the individual is judged against standards which apply equally to all members of society. For example, laws apply to all equally. Also, status is achieved through merit rather than ascribed.
- Education helps to ease these transitions. The exam system judges all pupils on merit, and school rules such as wearing uniform are applied to all pupils equally.

ii. Education helps to **socialize young people into the basic values of society**.

- Schools transmit two major values:
  - The value of achievement - everyone achieves their own status through their own effort
  - The value of equality of opportunity for every student to achieve their full potential.

Like Durkheim Parsons argues that the school is a miniature of society, today society is largely achieved and the school prepares the child for this.

### Criticisms of Parsons

- Dennis Wrong argues that functionalists such as Parsons have an 'over-socialized view' of people as mere puppets of society. Functionalists wrongly imply that pupils passively accept all that they are taught and never reject the school's values.
- He assumes that Western education systems are meritocratic, i.e. they reward students primarily on the basis of objective criteria such as achievement, ability and intelligence. The existence of private education and inequalities tied to social class, gender and ethnicity challenges this view.

### c. DAVIS AND MOORE - education and role allocation

- Davis and Moore see education as a means of role allocation. The education system sifts and sorts people according to their abilities.
- The most talented gain high qualifications which lead to functionally important jobs with high rewards.
- This will lead to inequalities in society, but this is quite natural and even desirable in capitalist societies because there is only a limited amount of talent. These talented few need to be persuaded to make a sacrifice (by staying on in education rather than earning a wage) and society therefore offers incentives through the promise of greater rewards, such as higher salaries.

### Criticisms of Davis and Moore

- Intelligence and ability have only a limited influence on educational achievement.
- Research indicates that achievement is closely tied to issues of social class, gender and ethnicity. For example, Bourdieu argues that middle class students possess more cultural and social capital and therefore are able to gain more qualifications than working class students.
- Similarly, Bowles and Gintis reject the functionalist view that capitalist societies are **meritocratic**.
- The children of the wealthy and powerful obtain high qualifications and well-rewarded jobs irrespective of their abilities. The education system disguises this with its myth of meritocracy. Those denied success blame themselves rather than the system. Inequality in society is thus **legitimated**: (*it is made to appear fair*).
- Furthermore, the ranges of class differences in educational achievement suggest that not everyone actually has the same chance in education.

## 2. The New Right Perspective on Education

The New Right is more of a political than sociological perspective. However, the New Right is of interest to sociologists because:

- It is a more recent conservative view than functionalism.
- It has influenced educational policy in societies

### Functionalism and the New Right compared

New Right ideas are similar to those of functionalists:

- They believe that some people are naturally more talented than others.
- They agree with functionalists that education should be run on meritocratic principles of open competition.
- They believe that education should socialise students into shared values and provide a sense of national identity.

In addition, the New Right believe that older industrial societies such as Britain are in decline, partly as a result of increased global competition.

### **The market versus the state**

#### **The effects of state control**

- A key feature of New Right thinking (not found in functionalism) is that too much state control of education (as well as other areas of social and economic life) results in inefficiency, national economic decline and a lack of personal and business initiative.
- A culture of welfare dependency develops, the cost of which has reduced investment in industry.

#### **One size fits all**

- New Right arguments are based on the belief that the state cannot meet people's needs.
- In a state-run education system, education inevitably ends up as 'one size fits all' that does not meet individual and community needs, or the needs of employers for skilled and motivated employees.

#### **Lower standards**

- State-run schools are not accountable to those who use them - students, parents and employers. Schools that get poor results do not change because they are not answerable to their consumers resulting in lower standards and a less qualified workforce.

#### **The solution: Marketization**

- For the New Right, the issue is how to make schools more responsive to their 'consumers'.
- In their view, the solution is the marketization of education.
- Marketization is the introduction of market forces of consumer choice and competition between suppliers (schools) into areas run by the state (such as education and health).
- The New Right argue that creating an 'education market' forces schools to respond to the demands of students, parents and employers. For example, competition with other schools means that teachers have to be more efficient.
- A school's survival depends on its ability to raise the achievement levels of its students above other schools..

#### **Chubb and Moe: giving the consumer choice**

- Chubb and Moe compared the achievement of 60000 students from low-income families in 1015 state and private high schools in the USA. The data shows that students from low-income families do 5% better in private schools. This suggests that state education is not meritocratic.
- State education had failed to create equal opportunity because it does not have to respond to students' needs.
- Parents and communities cannot do anything about failing schools while the schools are controlled by the state.
- Private schools produce higher quality education because they are answerable to paying consumers - the parents.

#### **The solution**

- Chubb and Moe's answer to the supposed inefficiency of state schools is to introduce a market system in state education - that is, give control to consumers (parents and local communities).
- In Zimbabwe the formation of School Development Committees has helped in making schools accountable to consumers.

#### **Evaluation**

- Although school standards - as measured by exam results - seem to have risen, there are other possible reasons for this improvement apart from the introduction of a market.
- Critics argue that low standards in some state schools are the result of inadequate funding rather than state control of education.
- Gerwitz argues that competition between schools benefits the middle class, who can get their children into more desirable schools.
- Marxists argue that education imposes the culture of a ruling class, not a shared culture or 'national identity' as the New Right claim.

## B. MARXIST EXPLANATIONS

What is Marxism?

Marxism is a conflict view that sees society as being based on class divisions and exploitation. Marxists argue that:

- In capitalist society there are two classes - the ruling class (capitalists, or bourgeoisie) and the subject class (working class, or proletariat)
- The capitalists' class owns the means of production (land, factories etc.) and makes their profits by exploiting the labor of the working class.
- This creates class conflict that threatens the stability of capitalism or even result in a revolution to overthrow it.
- Social institutions (such as the education system) reproduce class inequalities and play an ideological role by persuading exploited workers that inequality is justified and acceptable.
- Marxists argue that the main function of the education system is to reproduce the inequalities of the capitalist economic system.

### Louis Althusser - The role of ideology

- Althusser sees the education system as part of the ideological state apparatus. He claims that education, along with other ideological state apparatuses such as the family and the mass media, reproduce class-based inequalities by creating the belief that capitalism is somehow 'normal', 'natural' and 'just'.
- The effect of all this is that is the reproduction of the class system in that the sons and daughters of the working class tend to remain working class

### Bourdieu - cultural capital

- Like other Marxists, Bourdieu argues that the main function of education is to reproduce and legitimize ruling class culture and power. Another important function of education is to socialize the working class into a 'culture of failure' so that they take up, without question, routine and dull work.

### Bowles and Gintis - schooling in capitalist America

- Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that there is a close relationship between social relationships in the workplace and in education.
- This correspondence principal operates through the **hidden curriculum** and it shapes the workforce in the following ways:
  - It helps to produce a **subservient** workforce.
  - The hidden curriculum encourages an **acceptance of hierarchy**.
  - Pupils learn to be motivated by **external rewards** rather than the love of education itself.
  - School subjects are **fragmented** in the same way that routine work is.

✿ The end-product of this is the production of a **hard-working, docile, obedient workforce which is too divided** to challenge the authority of management.

### Evaluation of Bowles and Gintis

- Giroux argues that working class students do not accept the legitimacy of school.
- Many resist the influence of the hidden curriculum.
- The history of trade unionism and industrial action in the UK does not support the idea of worker conformity.

### Willis - Learning to Labour

- Willis challenges the over-deterministic nature of much of Bowles and Gintis's work, which sees schools producing docile and compliant workers
- He argues that working class 'fellows' see through the smokescreen/cover-up of meritocracy that tries to legitimate (justify) inequality. They create a counter-school culture that challenges the school's dominant values.

- However, Willis accepts that the outcome is similar to that suggested by Bowles and Gintis, as their anti-school behavior guarantees that they end up in dead-end jobs.

### Evaluation of Willis

- ▶ Blackledge and Hunt (1985) put forward some criticisms of Willis:
  - His sample is inadequate for generalizing about the role of education in society. His sample contained 12 pupils, all of them male, who were by no means typical of the children at the school
  - Willis largely ignores the full range of subcultures within schools. Many pupils fall somewhere in between total conformity and total rejection.

## **DIFFERENTIAL EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Certain groups always reach higher levels of educational attainment than others - measured in terms of qualification. Differences are noted between.

- **Social classes**
- **Different gender (females and males)**
- **Different ethnic groupings.**

### **A. SOCIAL CLASS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

It has been suggested that class stratification is directly related to educational attainment. The higher the social class the higher the levels of educational achievement are likely to be.

- ▶ Children from higher social class backgrounds have more chances of going to school early, stay in school, enter university and better schools and score higher qualifying grades.

### **THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

The socio-economic inclination of the family is an important factor that affects the Educational achievement of children. The higher the socio-economic status of the child's home the higher his educational life chances.

- ❖ Children from a lower socio-economic status are more likely to encounter problems such as:-
  - problem of accessibility/enrolment,
  - lack of motivation and encouragement,
  - drop-out,
  - negative attitude of parents to schooling resulting from poor condition,
  - Parents' inability to cope with school expenses,
  - Problems related to non-completion of schooling.
- ❖ Children of parents occupying higher socio-economic status stand a better chance of both gaining access to and achieving in education because they have the following advantages: -
  - Early enrolment in school: - Parents with higher socio-economic status give their children an early start in education by enrolling them in nursery schools.
    - ▶ This gives such children an edge over those who are not privileged to have an early start as it helps the children to be familiar with the school and its environment as well as its academic aspects like the learning of certain concepts such as 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 etc. and A B C D E F G H I J etc. as well as skills such as how to hold the pen, how to draw, paint and write.
  - Due to the financial position of parents under this class, they can buy school facilities and materials. Thus, learning is facilitated.
  - Children from higher socio-economic class are more likely to be encouraged and motivated. In addition to having an early start in education, they are also known to enjoy other privileges at home such as the following:
    - ▶ Children go school early (*never go late for lessons*)
    - ▶ Parents check their children's books after school hours.
    - ▶ Parent praise for hardworking performance.
    - ▶ Parents employ extra-lesson teachers for the children.
    - ▶ Such children are also more likely to attend the most prestigious schools because their parents have the resources to bear the costs of qualitative private education. Such schools are usually known for:



- Qualified teaching Staff;
- Adequate teaching and learning facilities;
- A high sense of commitment to work;
- Good teaching and learning environment; and
- High educational performance leading to opportunity for University or higher education, which at the end of the day provides good occupational opportunities and high income for living.

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Dubey et al (1979) identified the following in the light of the relationship between socioeconomic status of parents and their children's performance in school:

- i. The most important predictor of achievement in school associated with the family is socio-economic position
- ii. The higher the socio-economic status of the child's family, the higher we expect his school achievement to be;
- iii. The relationship of socio-economic status to achievement is always consistent, no matter whether our measure of status is the occupation of father, the education of parents, the income of family or a combination of these. It remains the most important predictor even if we consider the child's ability.
- iv. Family size. Children from lower socio-economic status homes tend to come from large families and start school with a verbal disadvantage because most likely such children have less interaction with adults and elder siblings and their parents are more likely to be without any formal education of the western type.

However, it is not always the case that children from high socio-economic status perform better than those from lower socio-economic status parents.

- Children from parents of higher socio-economic status who misuse the opportunities they got are unlikely to perform better.
- Children of lower socio-economic parents who are hardworking, dedicated and committed to work are likely to perform well.

**This of course may be connected to the fact that they have seen the poor condition of their parents and thus wish to change it for better through education.**

- Education is one of the agents of social mobility and thus influences a person's future economic status in society.
- The higher the level of education of an individual, the higher his chances of occupational opportunities.

## EFFECTS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION ON EDUCATION

- Parents of low socio-economic status may be either unaware of the benefits of what parents of high status know because of both their educational and occupational exposure, or unable due to poverty to provide certain school like or school supportive activities for their children at home.
- Parental support of education and the provision of other enriching experiences such as home tuition, access to home libraries, ability to learn the language of the school at home, an early start in education and access to most prestigious schools are not only crucial to children's success in school, but also **responsible for the emergence of an obvious class division in children's education life chances.**
- It is evidently clear from the above that social stratification promotes obvious class division in educational life chances.
- Marxists would thus see education perpetuating inequality in society.

## QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE IN EDUCATION

- Children of the high socio-economic parents gets the opportunity of having adequate school facilities, learn to speak English right from home before going to school and during school attendance at quality schools, having quality teachers etc.
- These and many other factors help to enable the children to have quality education thereby making a significant difference in terms of quality and level of education between the children of rich and elites on one hand and those of the poor and illiterates on the other hand.
- In this light there is differential access to education between the children of the haves and the have nots.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEM

Education is a sound investment that is expected to enhance the economic growth of individuals. It is a known fact that education is a strong factor of **social mobility**.

- Education has the ability to influence a person's future economic status in society. Therefore, a person who has attained higher level of education is likely to have higher chances of getting good jobs, which in return, determines an individual's social class.
- Children of higher socio-economic class stand better chances to attend the best schools and colleges and have better chances of going to tertiary institutions and Universities.
- This situation tends to create the socio-economic problems in the society, thereby, **widening the gap between the rich and the poor**.

#### OVER PROLIFERATION OF CLASS AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

- The economic position of parents largely determines their ability to provide education for their children.
- Wealthy parents send their children to class and private schools, leaving the poor parents to send their children to government or public schools most of which are not in good condition.
- It is relevant to note that in class and private schools, high fees and levies are charged, which tends to pose a serious problem to parents that are poor in their attempt to provide a quality and quantitative education for their children.
- This leads to the widening of the educational gap between the children of the poor and rich parents in society.

#### RURAL-URBAN IMBALANCE IN EDUCATION

- Some people in society have direct access to quality educational opportunities.
- People that are living in the cities and urban centres have access to more and quality resources.
- Those in the rural places do not enjoy the accessibility of resources.
- Thus, they have no option other than to send their children to the poor schools in the village.
- These are the rural-urban differences in educational opportunity in society.
- Social stratification in this respect leaves rural groups and the poor people to remain deprived of educational opportunity from generation to generation.

#### B. GENDER BIAS IN EDUCATION

Girls and women from middle and upper class parents are advantaged when it comes to the provision of education, especially where there are boys and girls in the family. As for the upper class parents, they stand a better chance of educating both boys and girls. On the other hand parents that are poor are likely not to be able to send all their children to school. Thus, when it comes to who is to go to school, girls or women are placed at a disadvantage. The usual reason is that, girls and women are taken for marriage and therefore, it is more important to educate the boy-child. The economic factor is playing a significant role in determining the educational life chance of boys and girls.

#### GENDER AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

A variety of explanations have been advanced for gender differences in educational attainment. The major assumption being that girls are less successful.

**Some reasons why girls are less successful are: -**

- a) **Innate ability:** - one possible explanation for female under achievement is that there are differences in innate ability. This is disputed however as most research has come up with the fact that it is in fact girls who score higher in than boys in innate ability.
  - b) **Early socialisation:** - Fiona Norman and colleagues point out that before children start school, conditioning and sex stereotyping have already begun.
    - Type of play encouraged for boys and girls: - Boys are generally encouraged to be more active than girls and this may be reflected in the classroom.
    - Type of toys boys and girls are given: - Boys are more likely than girls to be given constructional toys which can help them to develop scientific and mathematical skills and concepts.
- ✿ These reinforce stereotype of carriers for women and men
  - ✿ Stereotype of men and women can further be developed by media through comic books, televisions and various types of adverts.

In a research in the 1970s Sue Sharpe found that girls' priorities were unlikely to encourage them to attach greater importance to education.

→ Girls tend to see their future largely in terms of marriage rather than work.

→ In fact, Sharpe's order is **love, marriage, husbands, children, jobs and carriers**.

c) **Material factors:** - J.W.B. Douglas and colleagues suggest that in some families more resources are devoted to education of sons than daughters.

d) **Socialisation in schools:** - many sociologists have claimed to detect bias against girls in the educational system.

→ Most reading materials for schools portray more Heroes than Heroines. This puts a picture that males are superior to females.

→ To girls who read there is a damage to their self-esteem/self-regard/self-concept.

### Explanations for girls' improvement in achievement

a. **External factors:** - (outside school) factors which may explain the improvement in girls' achievement include:

#### 1. The impact of feminism

- Since the 1960's feminism has challenged the traditional stereotypes of a woman's role as mother and housewife within a patriarchal family. More broadly, feminism has raised girls' expectations and ambitions with regard to careers and family.

- These changes are partly reflected in media images and messages. A good illustration of this is McRobie's comparison of girls' magazines in the 1970s and 1990s. In the 1970s girls' magazines stressed the importance of getting married, whereas in the 1990s they emphasised career and independence.

#### 2. Changes in the family

- There have been a number of major changes to the family in the last 30 years. Some of these include an increase in the divorce rate, an increase in cohabitation, and an increase in the number of lone-parent families (mainly female headed).

- These changes are affecting girls' attitudes towards education in a number of ways. For example, increased numbers of female-headed lone-parent families may mean more women need to take on the major income-earner role. This then creates a new financially independent, career-minded role model for girls. The need for good qualifications is made very clear.

#### 3. Changes in women's employment

- There have been some important changes to women's jobs in recent years. The proportion of women in employment has risen from under 50% in 1959 to over 70% in 2007. Some women are breaking through the invisible barrier of the 'glass ceiling' to high level professional jobs previously denied them. These greater opportunities provide an incentive for girls to take education seriously.

#### 4. Girls' changing ambitions

- The view that changes in the family and employment are producing changes in girls' ambitions is supported by research.

- For example, Sue Sharpe compared the results of interviews she carried out with girls in the 1970s and girls in the 1990s. In the 1970s girls had low aspirations, saw educational success as unfeminine and gave their priorities as love, marriage, husbands and children before careers. In the 1990s, however, girls were more likely to see their future as independent women with a career, rather than being dependent on a husband and his income.

#### b. Internal factors

While factors outside the school may play an important part in explaining gender differences in achievement, factors within the education system itself are also important. These include:

#### 2. Equal opportunities policies

- The belief that boys and girls should have the same opportunities in school are now part of mainstream thinking. In Zimbabwe the Government adopted a policy that accords girls the same opportunity to access to education since independence.

- Jo Boaler argues that equal opportunities policies are a key factor in the improvement of girl's educational performance. Schools have become more meritocratic which means that because girls in general work harder than boys, they achieve more.

### 3. Positive role models in schools

- In recent years, the proportion of female teachers and female head teachers has increased. As such, women in positions of power and authority have acted as important role models for girls because they show girls that it is possible for them to achieve important positions. This then reinforces the importance of education in gaining such positions.

### 4. Teacher attention

- Research suggests that teachers respond more positively to girls than boys.
  - ~ This is because teachers see girls as more co-operative and boys as more disruptive.
  - ~ This may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which positive interactions raise girls' self-esteem and levels of achievement
- Barber found that teacher-pupil interactions were very significant. For girls, feedback from teachers focused more on their work rather than their behaviour; for boys the reverse was true.
  - ~ Research by Abraham (1995) suggests that teachers perceive boys as being more badly behaved than girls in the classroom, and as such expect bad behaviour.

### 5. Challenging stereotypes in the curriculum

- Some sociologists argue that removing gender stereotypes from training schemes, textbooks and other learning materials has removed a barrier to girls' achievement.
- Gaby Weiner argues that since the 1980s, teachers have challenged gender stereotypes. Also, in general, sexist images have been removed from teaching materials. This may have helped to raise girls' achievement by presenting more positive images of what women are capable of.

### Explanations for the underachievement of boys

- Mitsos and Browne (1998) believe that boys are under-achieving in education, **although they also believe girls are disadvantaged**.
- The evidence of boys' under-achievement, according to Mitsos and Browne, is that:
  - Girls do better than boys in every stage of National Curriculum SAT [Standard Assessment Tests] results in English, Maths and science, and they are now more successful than boys at every level in GCSE, outperforming boys in every major subject ... except physics.
- Atkinson and Wilson's (2003) research shows that the gap between boys' and girls' achievement at school grows between 7 and 16. Their study of 500,000 children shows that despite boys outperforming girls in maths and science in early schooling, by the age of 16 girls were achieving higher results in both subjects.

**There are a range of reasons why boys are underachieving compared to girls:**

#### External factors

##### 1. Boys' poorer literacy skills

- Some evidence suggests that girls are more likely to spend their leisure time in ways which complement their education and contribute to educational achievements. Mitsos and Browne place considerable emphasis on reading. Women are more likely to read than men, and mothers are more likely than fathers to read to their children. Girls are therefore more likely to have same-sex role models to encourage them to read.
- As such, poor language and literacy skills are likely to affect boys' performance across a wide range of subjects

##### 2. The decline of traditional male jobs

- The decline in male manual work may result in working class boys lacking motivation. Mitsos and Browne argue that this decline in male employment opportunities has led to a **crisis of masculinity**. Many boys now believe that they have little chance of getting a proper job. This undermines their self-esteem and motivation and so they give up trying to gain qualifications.
- However, while there may be some truth in these claims, it should be noted that the decline has largely been in traditional manual working class jobs, many of them unskilled or semi-skilled. Traditionally, many of these jobs would have been filled by working class boys with few if any qualifications. It therefore seems unlikely that the disappearance of such jobs would have much of an impact on boys' motivation to gain qualifications.

### 3. Unrealistic expectations

- Research indicates that boys are often surprised when they fail exams and tend to put their failure down to bad luck rather than lack of effort.
- Becky Francis points out that boys are more likely to have career aspirations that are not only unrealistic but often require few formal qualifications, e.g. professional footballer. Girls' aspirations, however, tend to require academic effort, e.g. doctor, and therefore they have a commitment to schoolwork.

#### Internal factors

##### 1. The feminization of education

- According to Tony Sewell boys fall behind in education because schools have become feminized. This means that schools tend to emphasize feminine traits such as methodical working and attentiveness, which disadvantages boys.

##### 2. Teacher interaction

- Teacher-pupil interactions were identified by Barber as being very significant. For girls, feedback from teachers focused more on their work rather than their behaviour; for boys the reverse was true. The low expectations of girls in science reinforced their own self-images; boys frequently overestimated their abilities.
- Negative teacher labelling for some boys undermined their confidence and interest in school. For both boys and girls, where motivation in a subject is low, achievement tends to be low.
- Teachers may tend to be less strict with boys, giving them more leeway with deadlines and expecting a lower standard of work than they get from girls. This can allow boys to under-achieve by failing to push them to achieve their potential

##### 3. Masculine subcultures

- Some sociologists argue that the growth of 'laddish' subcultures has contributed to boys' underachievement.
- Mac an Ghaill examines the relationship between schooling, work, masculinity and sexuality. He identifies a particular pupil subculture, the 'macho lads' which could help to explain why some boys underachieve in education.
- This group was hostile to school authority and learning, not unlike the lads in Willis's study. Willis had argued that work especially physical work - was essential to the development of a sense of identity. By the mid-1980s much of this kind of work was gone. Instead, a spell in youth training, followed very often by unemployment, became the norm for many working-class boys.
- Jackson found that laddish behavior was based on the idea that it is uncool to work hard at school. She found that boys based their laddish behavior on the dominant view of masculinity - they acted tough, messed around, disrupted lessons and rejected schoolwork as 'feminine'.

#### Evaluation

- **Weiner, Arnot and David (1997)** are somewhat sceptical about the sudden discovery of male underachievement.
  - They argue that the media have created a misleading **moral panic** which exaggerates and distorts the extent and nature of any problem.
  - They argue that although the media are also interested in the underachievement of upper class boys they see lower class underachievement as a particular problem because it is likely to lead to unqualified, unemployable black and working class men turning to crime.
- **Cohen (1999)** argues that the question is not 'why are boys underachieving', but 'why boys' underachievement has now become an object of concern?'
  - Her answer is that it is not just the destruction of the industrial base of Britain; nor is it the result of pressure put on men by feminism, or by girls' superior achievement in recent years.
  - It is because discussions about achievement, academic success and attainment all have boys as their main object. The call for a new focus on boys is not new, but merely perpetuates the historical process which has always assumed boys to have special potential which has not been fully developed. Their underachievement has always been protected from scrutiny.

## Explanations of gender differences in subject choice

There are pronounced differences in subjects that males and females study, boys tend to go for the sciences and technical while girls go for the arts and humanities. Many factors have been put forward by sociologists to influence levels of attainment in education come also to influence subject choice particularly cultural factors such as early socialisation.

→ When choosing subjects females and males may well be influenced by what they have learned about femininity and masculinity.

### 1. Early socialization:

- Murphy and Elwood argue that early difference in gender socialization leads to boys and girls having different tastes in reading and these can lead to differences in subject choice.
  - Boys tend to read hobby books which develops an interest in the sciences, whereas girls tend to read stories about people which leads to interests in English.

### 2. Gender domains:

- According to Browne and Ross, gender domains are the tasks and activities that children see as male or female territory. Children tend to be more confident in engaging in tasks which they see as part of their gender domain. For example, in a maths task, boys will be more confident tackling a problem related to cars, whereas girls might prefer a task related to health or nutrition.
- This could explain why girls are attracted to arts and humanities subjects and boys prefer sciences.

### 3. Gendered subject images

- Alison Kelly identifies two main reasons why science tends to be seen as masculine. The way science subjects are packaged makes them appear to be 'boys' subjects. The examples used in textbooks and by teachers tend to be linked to boys' experiences such as football and cars
- Students themselves make the greatest contribution to turning science into a boys' subject. Boys dominate classrooms, shouting out answers and grabbing apparatus first.

### 4. Peer pressure

- Peer pressure can influence subject choice in terms of gender domains. For example, boys tend to opt out of dance and music because others will perceive these subjects to be outside the male gender domain and apply negative pressure.
- Similarly, Paetcher points out that pupils see sport as being firmly inside the male gender domain and will therefore label girls as 'butch' or even 'gay' if they show too much interest in sports.

## EDUCATION AND GENDER IDENTITIES

Pupils' experiences of school can affect their gender identities through:

1. verbal abuse
2. male peer groups
3. teachers and discipline
4. the male gaze

These experiences help to reinforce what Connell calls 'hegemonic masculinity' - the dominance of heterosexual masculine identity and the subordination of female and gay identities.

### 1. Verbal abuse

- According to Connell boys use name-calling to put girls down if they behave in certain ways.
- Paetcher found that name-calling helps to shape gender identities and male dominance. The use of negative labels such as 'gay' and 'queer' are ways in which pupils can control each other's sexual identities.

### 2. Male peer groups

- Mac an Ghail shows how peer groups reproduce a range of different working class masculine identities. For example, the 'macho lads' in his study were dismissive of other working class boys who worked hard and achieved.

### 3. Teachers and discipline

- Hayward found that male teachers told boys off for 'behaving like girls' and teased them when they achieved lower marks than female students.

#### 4. The male gaze

- Mac an Ghaill refers to the 'male gaze' as a way of looking girls up and down and seeing them as sexual objects. He argues that the male gaze is a form of surveillance through which dominant masculinity is reinforced and femininity devalued. This is achieved, for example, through telling stories of sexual conquest

#### C. SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL FACTORS THAT AFFECT EDUCATIONAL GAPS

There are external (outside school factors) explanations for the class gap in achievement which are: -

##### 1. Cultural deprivation theories- these include class differences in norms and values acquired through socialisation, attitudes to education, speech patterns etc.

- A number of studies have argued that the values, attitudes and aspirations of parents have an important effect on their children's education. According to Herbert Hayman (1960) the value system of lower classes creates a self-imposed barrier to an improved position.
  - Lower class members place lower value of education. They see less value in continuing in school after minimum school leaving age. Douglas (1962) found that length of stay in the educational system was related to social class.
  - Lower class citizens place lower value in achieving high occupational status
    - They emphasize on stability, security and immediate benefits.
    - They reject the risk of investment involved in aiming for higher status (education thus suffers).
  - Lower class members also believe there is less opportunity for personal advancement.
- Leon Feinstein argues that the main reason for working class children underachieving was their parents lack of interest in their children's education. Working class parents are unlikely to give their children educational toys and activities that will stimulate their thinking and reasoning skills, and less likely to read to them. This affects their intellectual development so that when they begin school they are at a disadvantage compared to middle class children.
- **Speech patterns:** - Basil Bernstein distinguishes between **elaborated** and **restricted** speech codes.
  - Lower class children tend to use a restricted code which is: -
    - ~ less analytic and more descriptive.
    - ~ It is particularistic - it assumes that the listener shares the particular meanings that the speaker holds, so does not spell them out.
    - ~ Short, grammatically simple and often unfinished sentences are used.
    - ~ People who mostly use this code have so much in common like family members and thus meaning may not be available to outsiders.
  - Higher class children use an elaborate code which is more analytic in which speakers spell out exactly what they mean.
  - Importantly, the elaborate code is the one used in the education system, giving middle class children an advantage over working class children. This could partly explain the class gap in achievement as lower class students fail to fully acquire some the demanded skills by the education system e.g. being inquisitive and investigative.

#### Evaluation

- Nell Keddie describes this cultural deprivation as a myth and sees it as a victim-blaming explanation.
  - ~ She argues that working class kids are culturally different not culturally deprived.
  - ~ They fail because they are disadvantaged by an education system that is dominated by middle class values.

##### 2. Material deprivation factors:

- Material deprivation refers to the lack of physical resources such as money, room, equipment etc. which may have an adverse effect on the educational achievement of working class children.
- Smith and Noble point out the importance of material factors in influencing class differences in educational achievement. For example, having money allows parents to provide educational toys, books, a healthy diet, more space in the home to do homework, greater opportunities for travel and private tuition.



- Research by Warwick University found that many students face **selection or admission by mortgage** whereby wealthier middle class parents can move into the catchment area of good schools, leaving less successful schools full of working class students.
- Similarly, Gerwitz found that differences in economic and cultural capital lead to class differences in how far parents can exercise choice of secondary school. Professional middle class parents tend to be **privileged skilled choosers** who understand how the schools' admissions procedures work and can use this 'hot' knowledge to access the best schools.

### 3. Cultural capital

- Pierre Bourdieu uses the concept of **cultural capital** to explain why middle class students are more successful.
  - ~ He uses the term cultural capital to refer to the knowledge, attitudes, values, language, tastes and abilities of the middle class.
  - ~ Bourdieu sees middle class culture as capital because it can be translated into wealth and power, and gives an advantage to those who have it.
  - ~ This is because the culture, knowledge and language of the school fits more closely to middle class culture, therefore middle class students have an in-built advantage.
- On the other hand, the children of working class parents experience a cultural deficit. They soon realize that the school and teachers attach little importance to their experiences and values. As such they may lack the cultural capital necessary for educational success.

#### Internal Explanations for the Class Gap

The main internal (inside school) explanations for the class gap in achievement are:

##### 1. Labelling

- One of the most important aspects of the interactionist approach to education concerns the ways in which teachers make sense of and respond to the behaviour of their pupils.
- In a study of an American kindergarten Rist found that it was not ability which determined where each child was seated, but the degree to which the children conformed to the teacher's own middle class standards. In other words, the kindergarten teacher was evaluating and labelling pupils on the basis of their social class, not on the abilities they demonstrated in class.
- Gillborn and Youdell found that teachers are more likely to see middle class students as having the ability to enter higher level exams. This is based more on the teachers' perceptions of what counts as ability rather than the students' actual ability. The result is discrimination against many working class students who are denied the opportunity to attempt to obtain the higher grades.
- As such, all this research suggests that teachers tend to expect more from middle class students, and are more likely to convey their expectations to them and act in terms of it. The result is a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby teachers' expectations of students' future behaviour and attainment will tend to come true.

#### Evaluation:

- Cruder versions of labelling theory are rather deterministic in suggesting the inevitability of failure for those with negative labels attached to them. For example, Margaret Fuller found that the black girls in her study resisted the attempt to label them as failures by devoting themselves to school work in order to be successful.
- Marxists also criticise labelling theory for ignoring the wider structures of power within which labelling takes place.
  - ~ They argue that labels are not merely the result of teachers' individual prejudices, but stem from the fact that teachers work in a system that reproduces class divisions.

##### 2. Banding, Setting and Streaming

- A number of studies by Ball, Hargreaves and Lacey have looked at the effects of ability grouping in secondary schools. In general, they found a tendency for middle class students to be placed in higher groups and for working class students to be placed in the lower groups.
- They found that teachers tend to have lower expectations of working class students, deny them access to higher level knowledge and tend to enter them for lower level examination tiers.

- Campbell (2001) argues that subject setting advantages middle class students in the top sets because research evidence suggests their attainment increases, while working class students in the bottom sets do not increase their attainment at the same rate or to the same level.
- Stephen Ball (2003) refers to setting as **social barbarism** because it allows well-off parents to separate their children from 'others' whom they consider socially and intellectually inferior. He points to overwhelming research evidence that shows that grouping by ability leads to greater social class inequalities between children.

#### **D. ETHNICITY AND ACHIEVEMENT**

Patterns of ethnic achievement are complex, cross-cut by gender and class. For example,

- Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students do worst, Indians and Chinese do best.
- White students are very close to the national average, but this is because they the great majority of the school population.
- Among black and working class students, girls do better than boys, but among Asians, boys do better than girls.
- Working class black girls do better than working class white girls.

#### **External (outside school) explanations**

##### **1. Cultural factors and attainment**

###### **a) Language**

- In some Asian households English is not the first language used. The PSI study found that lack of fluency in English was a significant problem for some groups. Amongst men nearly everyone spoke English fluently. Amongst women about a fifth of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were not fluent.
- However, Gillborn and Mirza (2000) point out that the very high attainment of Indian pupils suggests that having English as an Additional Language is not a barrier to success

###### **b) Family life**

- A number of writers suggest that the nature of family life affects levels of attainment among ethnic minorities.
- Driver and Ballard found that South Asian parents have high aspirations for their children's education despite having little formal education themselves.
- Pilkington believes that there is strong evidence that the cohesiveness of Asian families may assist in the high educational achievement of some Asian groups, and that African Caribbeans may have family cultures that are not as conducive to educational support.
- However, Gillborn and Mirza (2000) argue that research shows that African-Caribbean pupils receive greater encouragement to pursue further education than other ethnic groups.
- Recent research has suggested that white working class students are among the lowest achievers with very low aspirations. Lupton (2004) found that teachers reported poorer levels of behaviour and discipline in white working class schools. Teachers blamed this on lower levels of parental support and the negative attitude white working class parents have towards education. By contrast, many ethnic minority parents see education as a route to upward social mobility.

#### **Internal (inside school) factors**

##### **1. Racism and under-achievement**

- Recent research by Gillborn and Youdell (2000) has argued that racism continues to play an important part in disadvantaging ethnic minorities in the educational system.
- They argue that the expectations held of black students were comparatively low and through a system of 'educational triage' they were systematically denied access to the sets, groups and exams that would give them the best chance of success.
- Blair et al show that there is a marked lack of black role models in British schools and a specific lack of head teachers from ethnic minority groups.
- However, Smith and Tomlinson found schools to be tolerant of all ethnic groups, with a lack of antagonism between students from different ethnic groups. OFSTED showed that exclusion for Indian, Bangladeshi and Chinese students is lower than for white students, per thousand people.

## 2. Teacher perceptions and expectations

- Much research has indicated that teachers have lower expectations of black boys than they have of other students. These students tend to be labelled as troublemakers and seen as disruptive. Gillborn argues that this labelling is likely to result in a self-fulfilling prophecy in which black students become disruptive and low-achieving.
- However, Mac an Ghaill (1992) found that there was not a direct relationship between teacher expectation and achievement. In his ethnographic study of a Midlands sixth form college he found that the way that students perceived and responded to schooling varied considerably and was influenced by the ethnic group to which they belonged, their gender, and the class composition of their former secondary school.

## 3. Curriculum bias and ethnocentrism

- Subjects such as English Literature, history and religious education have been accused of being ethnocentric. The focus of these subjects have tended to be the achievements of white European Christian peoples. The national Curriculum does not include the history of black people, and foreign languages taught in schools are primarily European. Where other languages are taught these tend to be extra-curricular

### Processes Within Schools

#### A. Labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy:

- Howard Becker found that teachers tend to classify and evaluate students in terms of a standard 'ideal pupil'. Teachers perceived students from non-manual backgrounds as closest to this ideal; those from lower working class origins as furthest from this ideal. He concludes that the meanings in terms of which students are assessed and evaluated can have significant effects on interaction in the classroom and attainment levels in general.
- In terms of ethnicity, much research has indicated that teachers have lower expectations of black boys than they have of other students. These students tend to be labelled as troublemakers and seen as disruptive. Gillborn argues that this labelling is likely to result in a self-fulfilling prophecy in which black students become disruptive and low-achieving.
- Similarly, in terms of gender, negative teacher labelling for some boys has undermined their confidence and interest in school. For both boys and girls, where motivation in a subject is low, achievement tends to be low.

#### Evaluation:

- Cruder versions of labelling theory are rather deterministic in suggesting the inevitability of failure for those with negative labels attached to them. For example, Margaret Fuller found that the black girls in her study resisted the attempt to label them as failures by devoting themselves to school work in order to be successful.
- Marxists also criticise labelling theory for ignoring the wider structures of power within which labelling takes place. They argue that labels are not merely the result of teachers' individual prejudices, but stem from the fact that teachers work in a system that reproduces class divisions

#### B. The organisation of schooling - banding and streaming:

- A number of studies by Ball, Hargreaves and Lacey have looked at the effects of ability grouping in secondary schools. In general, they found a tendency for middle class students to be placed in higher groups and for working class students to be placed in the lower groups.
- They found that teachers tend to have lower expectations of working class students, deny them access to higher level knowledge and tend to enter them for lower level examination tiers.
- Recent research by Gillborn and Youdell (2000) has argued that racism continues to play an important part in disadvantaging ethnic minorities in the educational system. They argue that the expectations held of black students were comparatively low and through a system of 'educational triage' they were systematically denied access to the sets, groups and exams that would give them the best chance of success.

- Stephen Ball (2003) refers to setting as **social barbarism** because it allows well-off parents to separate their children from 'others' whom they consider socially and intellectually inferior. He points to overwhelming research evidence that shows that grouping by ability leads to greater inequalities between children.

#### Evaluation

- Marxists argue that labelling theory is vague in its explanations of the criteria that underpin teacher judgements. Marxists like Althusser would argue that labelling is part of an 'ideological' process aimed at ensuring the social reproduction of class inequality, i.e. capitalism's need for a conformist manual labour force.
- Peter Woods argues that schools are more complex than labelling theory acknowledges. Many students adopt 'work avoidance strategies' without attracting negative teacher judgements.

### C. Pupil sub-cultures

#### Class subcultures

##### 1. Paul Willis - "Learning to Labour"

- The main focus of Willis' study was a group of 12 working class boys in their last 18 months at school and their first few months at work. The 'lads' (as Willis refers to them) formed a friendship grouping which was part of a "*counter-school culture*" opposed to the values espoused by the school.
- Willis argues that it is the rejection of school which prepares the 'lads' for their role in the workforce. Working class pupils are not forced into manual labour but they are able to recognise that their own opportunities are limited. They know that school work will not prepare them for the types of occupations they are likely to get.
- Willis claims that the lads realise they are being exploited but see little opportunity for changing this situation and, ironically, their own choices mean that they become trapped in some of the most exploitative jobs that capitalism has to offer.

#### Evaluation

- Willis' study has been criticised for having a sample which is far too small to form the basis for generalising about working class experiences in education. By choosing to study only 12 students, all of them male, his study can't even be seen as representative of the school he studied, let alone all school pupils.

##### 2. Mairtin Mac an Ghaill - 'The Making of Men'

- Mac an Ghaill illustrates the complexity of subcultural responses by examining the relationship between schooling, class, masculinity and sexuality. He identifies a range of school subcultures.
  - a) **The 'macho lads'**
    - This group was hostile to school authority and learning, not unlike the lads in Willis's study.
  - b) **The academic achievers**
    - This group, who were from mostly skilled manual working-class backgrounds, adopted a more traditional upwardly mobile route via academic success. They would counter accusations of effeminacy either by confusing those who bullied them, by deliberately behaving in an effeminate way, or simply by having the confidence to cope with the jibes.
  - c) **The 'new enterprisers'**
    - This group was identified as a new successful pro-school subculture, who embraced the 'new vocationalism' of the 1980s and 1990s. They rejected the traditional academic curriculum, which they saw as a waste of time.

#### Evaluation

- All of Mac an Ghaill's studies are small-scale ethnographic accounts. Therefore, they may provide a detailed picture of those being studied but they are not necessarily representative of all school students and it is difficult to generalise the findings to the rest of the population. However, it could be argued that the combination of a number of studies produces a more representative picture.

#### Gender and sub-cultures

- Research by Scott Davies shows how girls' resistance to schooling is less aggressive and confrontational than male anti-school behaviour. Where the 'lads' display an 'exaggerated masculinity', the girls in Davies's study adopted an 'exaggerated femininity'.
- They expressed their opposition to school by focusing on traditional feminine roles. They were overly concerned with 'romance' and prioritised domestic roles such as marriage, child-rearing and household duties over education.
- John Abraham's study of an English comprehensive school shows a different strategy of resistance to school. The girls pushed the school rules to the limit and responded to discipline by suggesting that it prevented them from getting on with their work. Teachers' objections to their behaviour were rejected as a waste of their time.

### **Ethnicity and sub-cultures**

- Tony Sewell's study of African-Caribbean students suggests a range of identities are found among these students:
  1. Conformists who accept the value of education and see good behavior as the key to academic success.
  2. Innovators, who accept the value of education and wanted academic success but rejected the school system,
  3. Retreatists who made themselves as invisible as possible.
  4. Rebels who rejected the school and projected an image of aggressive masculinity.
- Sewell's study is important because it shows the variety of African-Caribbean sub-cultures rather than just anti-school ones. It also suggests that pupil sub-cultures are influenced by what goes on outside school as well as inside it. For example, the Rebels drew heavily on Black street culture by having patterned hair, despite it being banned in school.
- Mirza and Gillborn found that, in general, African-Caribbean girls are ambitious, determined to succeed and have high status aspirations. However, they tend not to identify with their teachers or school. This is partly due to the open racism of a minority of teachers and the clumsy, well-meaning but often unhelpful 'help' offered by many teachers in response to the girls' ethnicity.

### **Education and Social Policy**

# TOPIC 8

## GENDER

### GENDER

Page One is not born a woman or man but becomes a woman or man. The term gender is used to refer to the social and cultural constructs of masculinity and femininity. (it does refer to biological differences) according to Anna |102 Yao (2004:4) Gender is a socially constructed term depicting the systems of relations between women and men, designating behaviours attitudes , roles, status and other processes that govern relationship arising from the sexes in a given cultural , socio-economic and socio-political context. Sex is biological while gender is social. People are born male and female but they learn to be boys and girls who grow into man and women. It follows that manhood and womanhood is learnt. This learned behaviour makes up gender identity and determines gender roles.

- a) **Gender roles:** - activities that man and woman are expected to carry out within a given community or household and differs according to the socio-cultural context.
- b) **Gender identity:** - Expected characteristics of different sexes that can further be distinguished by other categories such as age, ethnicity, economic class and social status.
- c) **Gender relations:-** refers to the system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and man are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to power and material resources and are allocated status within society.

#### ■ Case studies on gender by Margret Mead

- a) Arapesh tribe: - she found out that both males and females are socialised to exhibit qualities that we consider feminine.
- b) Mundungamore tribe: - children are socialised into what we consider to be masculine.
- c) Tchamuli tribe: - women are dominant and controlling. Men were emotionally dependent on the women and were regarded to be irresponsible.

### GENDER THEORIES

#### Functionalism

#### Marxism

#### Feminism

#### WID

#### WAD

#### GAD

## TOPIC 9

# SOCIAL STRATIFICATION



### Social differentiation

For greater efficiency in life human beings living in groups have always divided functions and labour. Individuals perform different tasks needed by the whole group such as gathering food, hunting, security and construction of shelter. Women in all societies bear children but beyond this role all statuses and roles are socially constructed. Groups make decisions about who is to do what. This we call differentiation. Societies become more differentiated as they develop as there are tasks to be done and this calls for more statuses and roles.

Social differentiation refers only to roles and statuses. It does not rank people according to importance. However it lays a foundation upon which people may be ranked; once people are ranked we talk of social stratification.

The popular dream among society's members is that of an egalitarian society: -

- A society where all members are equal.
  - People won't be ranked in any criterion.
  - There will be equal distribution of wealth, power and prestige.
  - Exploitation and oppression will disappear.
- ✿ It is clear from the qualities of an egalitarian society that it remains a dream. Social inequality exists in all human societies.
  - ✿ Wealth, power and prestige are unequally distributed between individuals and social groups within society.
  - **Power:** - degree to which individuals or groups can impose their will on others, with or without the consent of those others.
  - **Prestige:** - amount of esteem and honour associated with social positions, qualities of individual and life styles.
  - **Wealth:** - material possessions defined as valuable in particular societies e.g. land, livestock, buildings, money etc.
  - ✿ Social stratification refers to society's system of ranking people hierarchically according to various attributes such as: -
    - ▶ Income
    - ▶ Wealth
    - ▶ Power
    - ▶ Prestige
    - ▶ Age
    - ▶ Sex
    - ▶ Religion.

This produces an imaginary set of horizontal social layers that are more or less closed to entry from people outside any given layer. Societies that maintain rigid boundaries between social strata are said to have closed stratification systems e.g. the caste system (India). Societies whose boundaries are easily crossed are said to be open societies e.g. the class systems. In open systems it is possible for some individuals and families to move from one stratum to another and this movement is called social mobility.

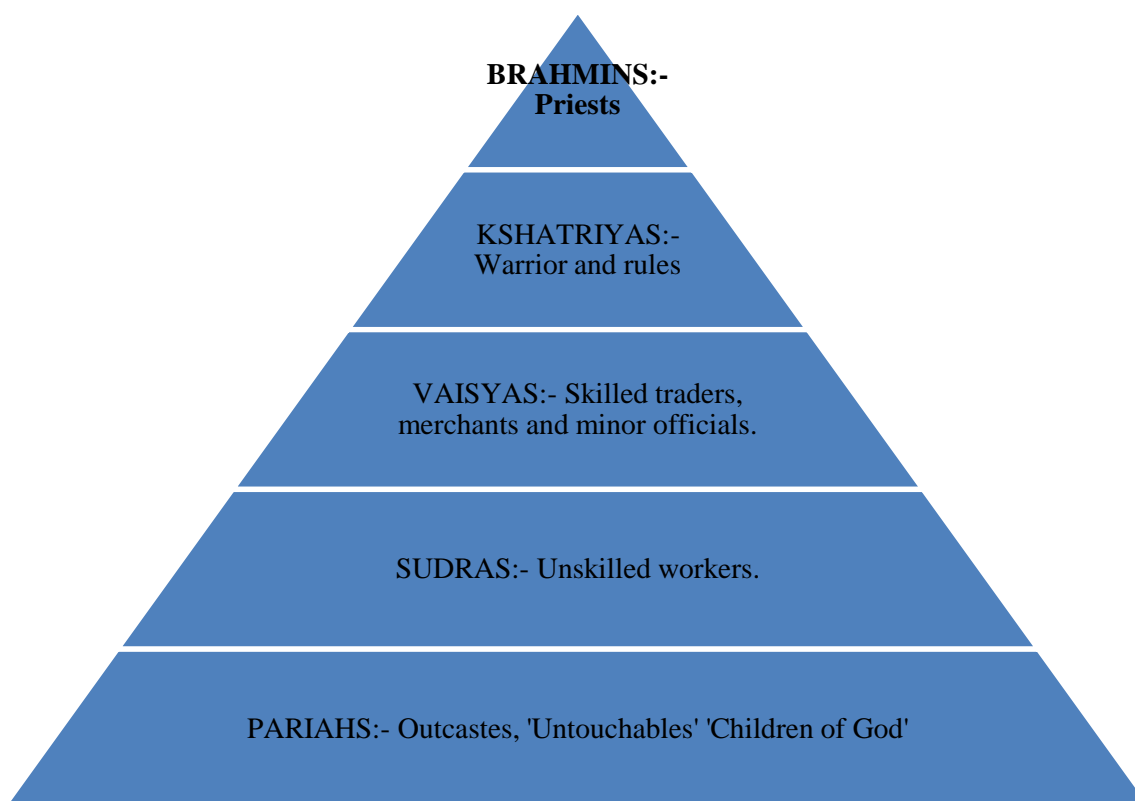
### The slave and Caste system

These systems are relatively closed with fixed positions ascribed at birth.



1. **Slave system:** - Society has two groups, one of citizens with citizen rights and the other that is more or less forcibly constrained by the stronger group and classified as property, an owner has the right to life or death over a slave members. Slaves themselves lack citizen status and some civil rights.
2. **Caste system:** - this system has horizontal strata and membership is ascribed at birth. Members in the same strata share a common life style and forbid marriage outside their strata.
  - Ambitions to move outside the strata are blocked by strong functions.
  - There are usually some visible criteria to distinguish members of the upper and lower caste such as hair style, dress patterns and body movement. The Indian caste system is the best example.
  - Each caste is restricted in its occupational specialisation e.g. Priestly caste are not allowed to participate in economic and political activities.
  - The requirements of physical distance are indicators of social distance. Membership in caste system is ascribed (given and birth).
  - It is not based on achievements and efforts of an individual.

## INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM



3. **Estate system:** - this system is also closed but less rigid than the caste system. This system flourished during the Feudal times. The estate system legitimates movement within each estate and from estate to another. There were three Estates i.e. the Clergy (Priests); the Nobility or the Aristocracy and the Commoners.
4. **Class system:** - the class system does not place rigid limitations on movement among social strata. One's class is determined by their relationship to the means of production. According to Karl Marx society is composed of two major classes, the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat.
  - Bourgeoisie: - these are the owners of the means of production. (Ruling class, Capitalists or the haves).
  - Proletariat: - sell their labour to the owners of the means of production. (Working class, have nots).
- ☀ **Class relationships involve inequality and exploitation:** - the two classes depend on each other with the ruling class exploiting the proletariat.
- ☀ **Max Weber sees wealth, prestige and power as determinants of one's class as well.**

## ASCRIBED AND ACHIEVED STATUSES

Status that individuals are born into as given by their social groups are known as **ascribed statuses**. Age, sex, ethnic group, religion, social class are ascribed statuses but they may be able to change some of these later in life. Age is a status that changes over time, the privileges of a status one enjoys change with age. Adults have higher status than children. Old age may however result in loss of status.

**Achieved status** is worked for by the individual. One acquires it by choice and competition. It includes changing some of the statuses that were ascribed at birth such as social class and religion. Examples of achieved statuses are Teacher, Nurse, Doctor and Engineer.

## LIFE CHANCES

Life chances are opportunities that people have of improving their life. These depend upon aspects of stratification such as social class, gender, and ethnicity. People who share these aspects are likely to have similar life chances. Life chances include opportunities for:-

- Employment
- Education
- Good health and well being
- Housing
- Social mobility
- Life expectancy.

These give the quality of an individual's life.

Life chances are affected by:-

- Laws that may limit human and civil rights of groups, preventing them from improving their life chances e.g. in S.A in the period of apartheid (1948-1994) segregation laws limited the life chances of black South Africans.
- Fatalism: - an individual's belief that they cannot control what happens to them for example working class people may have this belief.
- Gratification: - this relates ability to plan for the future.
  - i. **Deferred or delayed gratification** e.g. saving money for use in future or staying in school longer to get better paying jobs and better life chances.
  - ii. **Immediate gratification**: - sudden change for the better of an individual's life fortunes like inheriting money or winning a lottery where the individual spends the new wealth right away rather than being invested to ensure long term affluence.
- Life chances are also affected by aspects of social stratification like gender, social class and ethnic group e. g. Life expectancy is influenced in the following ways.
  1. **Gender**: women tend to live longer than men , this is possibly because:
    - Men are more likely than women to be in risky situations that may cause accidental death including car accidents.
    - Men in many societies consume more alcohol, tobacco and other drugs than women, making them more likely to suffer from serious diseases.
    - Men's work exposes them to risks, such as risks of accidents in mining and factory work.
    - There are also biological reasons for differences between the life expectancy of men and women.
  2. **Social class**: working class people have lower life expectancy than middle-class people in the same society. This is possibly because:
    - Working class occupations are more dangerous so there are more work related deaths.
    - Working class people may live in unhealthy environments, such as near sources of pollution or in damp cold houses.
    - Working class people may not be able to afford good health care.
  3. **Ethnicity**: minority ethnic groups tend to be low down the socio-economic scale and so they are affected by the same factors as those that influence social class and life chances.

- Racial discrimination also comes in to affect access to services that enhance life expectancy.
- Disease prevalence may be influenced by ethnic factors.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY

Stratification systems that are not rigid and allow movement of individuals within and across groupings are said to be fluid. This movement is called mobility and takes place in various ways.

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### TYPES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

1. **Vertical social mobility:** - movement from one social stratum to another, this can either be movement upwards or downwards. This type of movement results in change in social position of an individual.
  - If movement is upwards, then it means success for the individual or individuals involved.
    - A couple whose parents were unskilled workers may become educated and be able to afford a private house instead of renting as their parents did, such a couple is said to experience upward social mobility.
  - When the movement is downwards then it means failure and disaster.
    - Happens when fortunes decline and one cannot afford the kind of housing, medical care, education for children which one used to afford.
2. **Horizontal social mobility:** - individual in this case moves within one social stratum, there is no success or failure on the part of the individual. What has only happened is change of social position but the positions will be of the same prestige and power as what happens when one changes employment without promotion or demotion e.g. from being Teacher to a Nurse.
3. **Intergenerational social mobility:** - this social movement experienced by family members from one generation to the next.
4. **Intra generational social mobility** is the movement of individuals within their life time.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

### 1. FUNCTIONALIST EXPLANATIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION.

- a. **Functionalist** say that society is a meritocracy where the ablest people rise to the top.
  - Functionalism strongly believe that the class system allows individuals to find their right place and role in society. Most important positions must be filled by the ablest and bright people. According to functionalist High status, power and income are rewards for conforming to society's values.
- b. **New right market liberal perspective (neo functionalism):** - this perspective is a new form of functionalism which believes that:
  - inequality is motivating and promotes economic growth,
  - capitalism has widened the opportunity for everyone and socialist societies are suppressive.
  - market force encourage competition which ensure that goods and services are high quality and low in price making them available to a wider section of the population.
- i. **According to Davies and Moore (1967),** all societies have important tasks that must be accomplished and certain positions that must be filled, some position being more important for the survival of society than others. The most important positions must be filled by the most qualified people. The positions that are the most important for society and require scarce talent, extensive training or both must be the most highly rewarded. This argument assumes that social stratification results in meritocracy i.e. a hierarchy in which all positions are rewarded based on people's ability and credentials.
- ii. **According to Parsons:** -
  - stratification as inevitable and useful in all societies because it derives from shared values which are necessary in a social system.
  - Stratification systems evaluate individual in terms of common social values with high status being a reward for conforming to society's values.
  - Stratification reinforces the collective goals of society and establishes order.

However, these arguments are criticized by

- ii. **Melvin Tumin (1967)** who argues that: -
  - Many low-paid and even unskilled jobs are just as important as higher paid or more skilled jobs.
  - There is greater pool of talent than Davies and Moore assumes.
  - Training is a pleasant experience and does not require extra rewards to persuade people to undertake it.
  - Stratification systems can demotivate those at the bottom.
  - Stratification systems do not provide equality of opportunity and tend to prevent those from lower strata achieving their potential.
  - Stratification systems encourage hostility, suspicion, and distrust.
- iii. **Gordon Marshall and Adam Smith (1993)** also argue that: -
  - Capitalist societies are not meritocratic as the New Right claim.
  - Free market does not guarantee a fair chance for all; opportunities vary according which class you are born into for example inherited wealth makes it easier to start a business. Luck can play part in success, too. (a lotto win)
  - Class plays a part even if people are of equal ability. Evidence shows that people from lower social class backgrounds are less likely than those from upper class to get top jobs even when they have the same qualifications.

## CONFLICT EXPLANATION ON STRATIFICATION

Inequality does not serve as a source of motivation from a conflict perspective point of view. Some powerful individuals and groups are seen as exploiting weaker groups in society. They use their power, ideology and influence to maintain their favoured positions at the expense of others.

For Marx, class was the key to understanding everything in society. Marxists see stratification as a deliberately divisive tool for exploiting workers. According to Marx; class is a social group who share the same relationship to the means of production. The bourgeoisie class being the minority group but the ones who own the means of production while the proletariat is the subject class who own nothing but their labour.

### Bourgeoisies

- Own the means of production i.e. Land, capital, labour power, buildings and machinery.
- Can control the price at which they sell the goods produced.
- Can also control the wages they pay those who produce the goods they sell.
- Make profits by paying less than they sell to the workers and it is this profit which gives them wealth.
- These reasons give them power to control the rest of society in their interests.

### Proletariat

- They do not own the means of production but only their labour.
- They have little control in society.
- They depend completely on the ruling class for wages to live on.

### ☀ Because of their differences the ruling class and the subject class are continuously in conflict.

- The legal system, education, police, media and the political systems are instruments used by the ruling class to further their interests.
- The ruling class is also able to use institutions in society to control ideas and values in society by creating false picture of reality via the dominant ideology according to Marxism.
- According to Marx only when the means of production are communally owned classes will disappear, society could thus be equal thereby bringing an end to exploitation and oppression of some by others (**an egalitarian society**). Marx thought **workers** would have a revolution and bring in **communism** where everyone benefits rather than a few. Workers would thus realize their power and strength and revolt against the ruling class.

## Weberian classification

Although Max Weber agreed with most of Marx's ideas on stratification he rejected some of Marx's ideas. Like Karl Marx, Weber argued class and stratification come from economic basis however Weber did not go into any detailed predictions about the future or analysis of the past. To Weber there are three distinct areas of or forms of stratification in modern society.

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1. **Class power:** - economic power to access material goods and resources in society.
  2. **Social power:** - status, prestige and being respected by others.
  3. **Party power:** - political power and ability to influence decision making.
- ☀ Interlinked in real life: - a person with social power is also likely to have political and economic power.

Weber concentrated on class power and argued that classes develop from people's market situation.

- According to Weber an individual's market position varies depending on the level of demand for their skills and talents i.e. how an employer is willing to pay for their services. This goes on to include their ownership of property and assets.
- Weber sees some individuals within the property less group as being able to sell their labour at a higher price than others (those with scarce sought after skills such as professionals and managers) for Weber occupational groups could therefore be classes.
- Weberian stratification is not a case of two classes opposed to each other (the Marx type) or a comparative meritocracy (functionalism and the new right) but a complex hierarchy of layers, each with their own class and market position.
- Weber did not believe that a revolution by the proletariat was likely.
- He believed that not all power comes from wealth.
- Class according to Weber was not the only basis of social groupings in society, **status groups** could also be formed (*groups of people who enjoyed similar levels of status or respect in society*), these status groups might for example be based on ethnicity, age, nationality or gender. Status groups may also cut across classes as in the case of the gay community. **parties** such as political parties could also be formed to exercise political power or influence for example ZANU (PF) and MDC in Zimbabwe.

## POST-MODERNIST EXPLANATION ON STRATIFICATION

The postmodern theory argues that Class is not as important as it used to be.

- It claims that other differences such as gender, age and ethnicity are also important.
  - According to Pakulski and Waters (1996), individuals are classified into particular strata or groups in current society by cultural differences (values, lifestyles and beliefs) not economic positions.
  - Therefore, individual can define themselves as belonging to social groups or strata and can freely move from one to another by choosing their lifestyle and identity.
  - Pakulski and Waters point out that other forms of inequality and identity are more relevant than class whereas the rest of sociology still focus on class.
- ☀ To post modernists class does not exist in this postmodern world, identities are self-built anyway.

## THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE WORKING CLASS, MIDDLE CLASS AND UPPER CLASS

→ **Working class:**

- Fewer people in manual jobs than in non-manual as compared to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Service industries such as leisure have grown while primary and manufacturing industries have decreased.
- More women today are working.
- Wealth/income gap has widened.
- Most wealth still in the hands of a few (minority)

→ **Ruling class:**

- The new right says the ruling class has disintegrated

- Marxists on the other hand insist that the ruling class is alive and kicking.
- The middle class:
- Functionalist and Weberian sociologists cite the rise in professions (e. g. teachers, doctors, lawyers) as evidence of the expanding middle class.
- Embourgeoisement means working class is becoming middle class in life style and values as their incomes increase.

## TOPIC 10 AGE

Childhood in Zimbabwe and other societies  
Youths  
Old age  
Perspectives on age

## TOPIC 11 RACE AND ETHNICITY

Racial and ethnic groups in Zimbabwe  
Forms of racial discrimination  
Theories of discrimination and prejudice  
Patterns of racial and ethnic inequality  
Policy and legislation on discrimination

## TOPIC 12 UNEMPLOYMENT

The concept of unemployment  
Causes and effects of unemployment  
Distribution of unemployment in Zimbabwe  
Implications of unemployment

## TOPIC 13 POVERTY

Existence and persistence of poverty  
Measures to curb poverty  
Impact of poverty on society

## TOPIC 14

# ENTERPRISE AND WORK

Occupational structures

Management and organisation of work

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Technology

Government policies on enterprise

## OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE.

These are types of jobs performed by the working population. These two come in two broad forms i. e.

Manual and non-manual labour.

### Categories of employment

**Manual labour:** - Involves physical labour as in mining, construction work e. t. c.

**Non- manual labour (white collar jobs):** - involves little physical labour and more mental effort of force of personality as in shop assistants, clerks e. t. c.

### Types of industry

1. Primary Industry: - involve the exploitation of natural resources like Agriculture and Mining.
2. Secondary Industry: - manufacturing industry where objects are created.
3. Tertiary Industry: - this involve the provision of services of some kind such as transport, communication and healthcare services.

### Patterns and Trends in occupational structure.

Over the past century some trends have been noted in the occupational structure. These trends include: -

- A move away from manual work towards non-manual work.
- A move away from primary and secondary industry towards the tertiary industries.
- An increase in the number of women in the work force
- Growth in unemployment.

Work and gender

Ethnicity and unemployment

Ageism

Corruption

Nepotism

## MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

### The post-industrial and post urbanisation society thesis

- The capitalist labour process and the control of labour, scientist management, human -relations school, Fordism and post-Fordism, skill and deskilling, worker resistance and autonomy.



## Trade unionists, industrial relations workers, worker resistance and conflict resolution.

### Trade unions

These are groups of workers who band together to negotiate for salaries and better conditions of service for their membership (employees). A set of rules and officers to represent workers in their negotiations with the employers.

#### Functions of trade unions.

- Chief function is to safeguard interests of its membership.
  - ▶ Seeks to improve wage rates.
  - ▶ Seeks to improve working conditions, such as speed of job speed and safety.
  - ▶ Seeks to improve hours of work such as shortening the working week, gaining work holidays.
  - ▶ Seeks to unite individual members so that they will have more bargaining power.
  - ▶ Operates to influence legislation relevant to its members.

Our society is characterised by conflict between employers and employees. This conflict comes from the fact that employers want to keep wage rates as low as possible while employees seek the highest income possible. The number of strikes helps in measuring the degree of conflict within an organisation. Strikes are only one form of industrial action.

#### Types of Industrial action

- a) Work to rule: - workers stick rigidly to the letter of rules of employment, effectively slows down the production process.
- b) Industrial sabotage: - workers deliberately sabotage the machinery on which the working in order to make their grievances known to or to stop work for a rest.
- ✱ These two forms usually occur where the work force is not strong enough to strike.
- c) **Strikes:** - there are two type of strike;
  - i. **Official strike:** these are strikes that are officially recognized by the appropriate trade union.
  - ii. **Unofficial strike:** these are strikes that are not formally recognized by the executives of appropriate trade unions.

According to Hyman most strikes are the result of an immediate response by workers to a particular problem which arises and which is then solved locally by the factory- elected union representatives without ever going through official union channels to the point of being declared a strike. If the problem cannot be resolved by local negotiation it may take a number of days before it is declared official strike by the trade union.

#### Causes of strikes

- Wage disputes
- Working conditions
- Working hours disputes
- Disciplinary matters
- Solidarity action
- Monotonous alienating working conditions
- Bureaucracy and organisation of work; changing organisational cultures.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK

### The meaning of work

What is considered as work varies depending on such things as time, place society and individual preference. Examples include: -

- i. **Planting seeds:** - if done for sale its work but when done for pleasure or interest then it becomes leisure.
- ii. **Playing soccer:** - there is professional football but people can also play soccer as a pass time or leisure activity.

**Work is characterised by the following features: -**

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- Its paid.
  - Not done for primarily for pleasure however people can derive pleasure from work.
  - Most commonly there is an employer who imposes his or authority on the worker in exchange of wage.
  - Work usually takes place in a special place designed for the purpose of work e. g. factory or office.
  - There is some productive or useful outcome of the work done e.g. car are produced.
  - Hours of work are clearly demarcated from hours of non-work e.g. work starts at 8 A.M and ends at 4 P.M.
- ✿ Not all these have to be present for it to work.

In agricultural and hunting societies work and leisure could not be definitely divided, these two elements of life were closely integrated. During the industrial revolution the division of work and leisure times developed as the machines in factories needed to be started and stopped at precise times.

**Reasons why people work:** - people work for two sets of reasons; **intrinsic and extrinsic.**

- Extrinsic reasons: - people do work for wages.
- Intrinsic reasons: - people work for more than wages.
  - For interest and enjoyment of the job as in sportsmen.
  - Companionship found among workmates.
  - For women to escape the restrictive role of housewife.
  - Sense of identity.
  - Work gives status.

### **Work satisfaction**

The degree of work satisfaction influences our whole life. Work satisfaction refers to the level of enjoyment one obtains from participating in work. If work is not fulfilling, then alienation is experienced.

### **Alienation**

According to Karl Marx alienation is a situation when one gets no enjoyment from their work.

Alienation includes the following elements: -

- **Meaninglessness:** - a feeling that the job does not make sense; experienced especially where there is division of labour and work is divided into such small unrelated tasks. The workers fail to see why they are working.
- **Powerlessness:** - belief that the work has no power over the direction and speed of their work. Worker has no control of their work.
- **Normlessness:** - what the employer says the worker should feel about their work is different from what the work feels and this difference lead to industrial conflict.
- **Isolation:** - work environment cuts the worker from workmates and society at large. Noise, safety, cleanliness e. t. c make the worker feel for themselves only and forget about others; feel they are not part of society.
- **Self-estrangement:** - ideally any job ought to use the abilities and intelligence of the worker so that the work is fulfilling, if the job fails this then the worker gradually loses their personality and tries to express themselves in their leisure activities.

## Factors that influence satisfaction and alienation

- **Division of labour:** - extreme division of labour makes the individual's task irrelevant and small.
  - **Repetition:** - lack of variety in tasks being done leads to boredom and monotony and people lose interest in their job.
  - **Work environment:** - noisy and unpleasant working conditions cut off the workers from each other and society.
  - **Level of skill:** - according to Baldamus the greater the level of skill the greater the degree of work satisfaction.
  - **Control over production:** - the commitment towards work by workers increases if the workers have or feel they have some say in the pace and form of the production process.
- ✿ Routine work in pleasant working conditions is more fulfilling and less alienating than routine, unskilled and work in unpleasant conditions.

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## TOPIC 15 LEISURE

The relationship between work and leisure  
Factors affecting leisure activities  
Theories of leisure

## TOPIC 16 POPULATION AND HEALTH

Demography  
Migration  
Population distribution  
Healthcare system in Zimbabwe

## TOPIC 17 GLOBALISATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Theories of globalisation  
Effects of globalisation  
Theories of social change

## TOPIC 18 URBANISATION

Industrialisation and urbanisation in Zimbabwe  
Effects of urbanisation  
Government policy on urbanisation

## TOPIC 19 GOVERNANCE AND CITIZENSHIP

Types of government

## TOPIC 20

# DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Theories of crime and deviance  
Methods of social control  
Measurement of crime  
Distribution of crime

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## DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Two important questions that have to be answered when dealing with crime and deviance are:

- ▶ **What, exactly, is deviance?**
- ▶ **And what is the relationship between deviance and crime?**
- ▶ According to Philip Hudson, some misbehaviour, such as wearing clothes of the opposite sex, can be deviant in certain places, criminal in some places, and perfectly acceptable elsewhere.
- ▶ According to sociologist William Graham Sumner, **deviance** is a violation of established contextual, cultural, or social norms, whether folkways, mores, or codified law (1906).  
Deviance can be: -
  - as minor as picking one's nose in public or
  - as major as committing murder.
- ▶ Although the word "deviance" has a negative connotation in everyday language, sociologists recognize that deviance is not necessarily bad (Schoepflin 2011).
- In fact, from a structural functionalist perspective, one of the positive contributions of deviance is that it fosters social change. For example, war in Zimbabwe that brought independence was a result of the action of people who engaged in deviant activities as at the time because rising against the settler regime was regarded deviant.
- ▶ "What is deviant behaviour?"
  - Deviance refers to behaviour that does not conform to a society's norms or rules.
  - It is behaviour which is disapproved of by most people in society and which does not conform to society norms and values.

- Schaffer defines deviance as behaviour that violates the standards of conduct or expectations of a group or society e.g. being late for class, dressing too casually for a formal wedding,
- If a person behaves in a way that is seen as deviant and this is discovered, it could lead to negative sanctions such as being told off, ignored or ridiculed.

Whether an act is labelled deviant or not depends on many factors, including location, audience, and the individual committing the act (Becker 1963).

- Listening to your iPod on the way to class is considered acceptable behaviour.
- Listening to your iPod during your 2 o'clock sociology lesson is considered rude.
- Listening to your iPod when on the witness stand before a judge may cause you to be held in contempt of court, and consequently fined or jailed.
- ▶ As norms vary across culture and time, it makes sense that notion of deviance change also.
- Years ago Zimbabwean women who dressed in pants/trousers were negatively viewed but this has changed today with most women putting them on even in churches and work places but not for men to wear skirts.
- **Deviance is socially constructed**, whether an act is deviant or not depends on society's response to that act in a time of war, acts usually considered morally wrong, such as taking killing, may actually be rewarded. Rather, it is simply easier to define behaviour as deviant if you have standard against which to compare forms of behaviour some form commonly agree. 'Deviance is in the eye of the beholder. In other words, that which is deviant to me may not be considered deviant by you.

### Crime

- Is an illegal act that is punishable by law or it is an act that breaks the criminal laws of society.
- If a person commits a crime and is detected, they could be arrested, charged and prosecuted.
- If found guilty they will receive a sentence such as community service/ order, fine or imprisonment.

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEVIANCE

- Why does deviance occur?
- Does it have a purpose?
- What are the causes of crime and how does it affect a society?
- Who commits crime and what is the extend of crime?

### EXPLAINING CRIME AND DEVIANCE

There are several different sociological explanations for criminal and deviant behaviour which focus on social factors.

#### **Inadequate socialization within families**

- This is an explanation of young people's involvement in crime and deviance. It highlights the negative influence of home environment and the failure of parents to socialize their children adequately. New Right approaches argue that children whose parents fail to take responsibility for socializing them to accept society's norms and values correctly are more prone to crime.

#### **Sub-cultural theories**

- Sub-cultural theories explain crime and deviance in terms of the values of a particular subculture and the influence of the peer group. Young males in particular learn such deviant behaviour by joining a peer group/gang where deviant behaviour is the norm such as vandalism or joyriding. Albert Cohen, a sub-cultural theorist, argued that working-class boys joined delinquent subcultures to gain status within their peer group.

#### **Relative deprivation**

People feel relatively deprived when they see themselves as badly off relative to the living standards of the particular group that they may compare themselves to. For example, a bank clerk who wants a mansion with a pool like that owned by their regional manager may commit fraud to acquire the necessary funds because they could never afford it any other way.

#### **Labelling**

Labelling theory explores how and why some people become labelled as deviant or criminal. Cicourel, a phenomenologist, argued that a delinquent is someone who has been labelled as such. Being labelled deviant/criminal may result from the reaction of other people (such as the police) and may not be entirely due

to an individual's actions or behaviour. Labelling someone may help to create a self-fulfilling prophecy by pushing that person further towards deviance/crime.

**Theories attempt to explain what deviance and crime mean to society.**

There are biological (non-sociological) and sociological theories of deviance. As will be noted for non-sociological theories the cause of crime lies within the individual while society is responsible for sociological theory.

**BIOLOGICAL THEORIES:** these can also be called non-sociological theories. They are the physiological and psychological explanations of causes of criminal or deviant behaviour.

☀ **Cesare Lombroso** (1836-1909)

- After an extensive examination of prisoners' physiology, he advanced a theory that criminals were throwbacks to an earlier evolutionary human form.
- According to Lombroso criminals were genetically different.
- Furthermore, these individuals displayed visible physiological characteristics that could be used to identify them as deviant.
- He stated that outward signs of the criminal personality such as large jaws or extra fingers or toes.
- Eventually this theory was discredited when further research was unable to support the claim that prisoners differed in physical characteristics from the general population of non-criminals.

☀ **William Sheldon:** Theory of body types and crime (1940's and 1950s).

- Sheldon's work advanced the **somatotype** or "body build" school of criminological theory.
- Sheldon concluded that the delinquents tended to have muscular and athletic builds, he linked this with a tendency toward violent behaviour.
- However, his theory was refuted by further research which failed to link mesomorphic characteristics with the criminal population.
- When **control groups** were used, criminals were no more likely to be mesomorphs than the non-criminal population.
  - **endomorph:** heavy-set; corpulent
  - **mesomorph:** muscular, medium build
  - **ectomorph:** thin, frail, tall, slight build

☀ **Patricia Jacobs** assessed that there were genetic differences between criminals and non-criminals. During the 1960s with the further development of the science of genetics it was discovered that male had an extra Y chromosome in their cells. Patricia Jacobs established that a significant proportion of the XYY males were found among the violent criminal inmates of a Scottish mental institution.

- These individuals with extra Y chromosomes were sometimes referred to as "super males." (normal males = XY; normal females = XX)
- Some research (which was later refuted) suggested that these "super males" were unreasonably represented in the prison population. (Again, these findings were based on studies that lacked proper control groups).
- It was hypothesized that the extra Y chromosome predisposed them to violent behaviour.
- Media attention was focused on the theory when it was incorrectly reported that Richard Speck, convicted in 1966 of murdering eight student-nurses in Chicago, possessed this syndrome. (It was later determined that he did not).
- It was further determined that XYY males are no more likely to commit violent crimes than the normal population of males. But, this case stimulated an interest in possible genetic bases for deviance that continues today.

☀ **Psychological theories:** - others argue that criminals are psychologically different from the rest of the population.

- Bowlby (1946) argued those individuals who are deprived of maternal love in the first five years of life are likely to develop personality traits which lead them to commit crime.
- Eysenck (1964) concluded that individual who commit crime have inherited psychological characteristics which predispose them to crime.

**SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES:** - These theories can be grouped according to the three major sociological paradigms: functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory.



## **FUNCTIONALISM:**

Functionalists believe that deviance plays an important role in society and can be used to challenge people's views as such protests draw attention to their cause.

- ▶ Sociologists who follow the functionalist approach are concerned with how the different elements of a society contribute to the whole.
- ▶ They view deviance as a key component of a functioning society.
- ▶ Strain theory, Social disorganization theory, and Cultural deviance theory represent three functionalist perspectives on deviance in society.

### **Emile Durkheim: The Essential Nature of Deviance**

For Emile Durkheim deviance is a necessary part of a successful society as it performs three important functions: -

- 1) **Clarifies rules:** - when deviance is punished, it reaffirms currently held social norms, thus reminding society of the good and bad thereby clarifying rules. Seeing a student given detention for skipping class reminds other high scholars that playing hooky isn't allowed and that they, too, could get detention.
- 2) **Unites a group:** - when people come together against criminal activities in-group solidarity develops.
- 3) **Promotes social change:** - deviance challenges people's present views. It is through revolutionaries that change comes about (Nelson Mandela).

### **Dysfunctions of deviance**

- i. Threat to social order because it makes life difficult and unpredictable.
- ii. Cause confusion about norms and values of that society. People become confused about what is expected, what is right and wrong because of competing values.
- iii. Deviance also divert valuable resources e.g. to prisons - because to control wide spread deviance precious resources are called upon and shifted from other pressing social issues.

### **Travis Hirsch: Control Theory**

- Travis Hirsch Developed Durkheim's idea of shared values into the idea of social bonds.
- Continuing with an examination of large social factors, **control theory** states that
  - Social control is directly affected by the strength of social bonds and that deviance results from a feeling of disconnection from society.
  - Individuals who believe they are a part of society are less likely to commit crimes against it.

Travis Hirsch (1969) identified four types of social bonds that connect people to society:

- i. **Attachment (we care about others?)** measures our connections to others. When we are closely attached to people, we worry about their opinions of us. People conform to society's norms in order to gain approval (and prevent disapproval) from family, friends, and romantic partners.
- ii. **Commitment (what would we lose?)** refers to the investments we make in the community. A well-respected local businesswoman who volunteers at her synagogue and is a member of the neighbourhood block organization has more to lose from committing a crime than a woman who doesn't have a career or ties to the community.
- iii. **Involvement (has time for crime?) levels of involvement**, or participation in socially legitimate activities, lessen a person's likelihood of deviance. Children who are members of little league baseball teams have fewer family crises.
- iv. **Belief (believes in obeying rules?)** The final bond, **belief**, is an agreement on common values in society. If a person views social values as beliefs, he or she will conform to them. An environmentalist is more likely to pick up trash in a park because a clean environment is a social value to him (Hirsch 1969).

### **Robert Merton: Strain Theory**

- Strain theory argues that people engage in deviant behaviour when they are unable to achieve socially approved goals by legitimate means. Merton adapted Durkheim's concept of anomie to explain deviance. Merton's explanation combines two elements:
- **Structural factors-** society's unequal opportunity structure.
- **Cultural factors-** the strong emphasis on success goals and the weaker emphasis on using legitimate means to achieve them.
- For Merton, deviance is the result of a strain between two things;



1. The goals that a culture *encourages* individuals to achieve.
2. What the institutional structure of society *allows* them to achieve legitimately.

Sociologist Robert Merton agreed that deviance is an inherent part of a functioning society, but he expanded on Durkheim's ideas by developing **strain theory**, which notes that: -

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- ▶ Access to socially acceptable goals plays a part in determining whether a person conforms or deviates. From birth, we're encouraged to achieve the "Dream" of financial success.
- ▶ Not everyone in our society stands on equal footing. A person may have the socially acceptable goal of financial success but lack a socially acceptable way to reach that goal.
- ▶ According to Merton's theory, an entrepreneur who can't afford to launch his own company may be tempted to embezzle from his employer for start-up funds.

Merton defined five ways that people respond to the gap between having a socially accepted goal but no socially accepted way to pursue it.

- i. **Conformity:** Those who conform choose not to deviate. They pursue their goals to the extent that they can through socially accepted means.
- ii. **Innovation:** Those who innovate pursue goals they cannot reach through legitimate means by instead using criminal or deviant means.
- iii. **Ritualism:** People who ritualize lower their goals until they can reach them through socially acceptable ways. These members of society focus on conformity rather than attaining a distant dream.
- iv. **Retreatism:** Others retreat and reject society's goals and means. Some beggars and street people have withdrawn from society's goal of financial success.
- v. **Rebellion:** A handful of people rebel, replacing a society's goals and means with their own. Terrorists or freedom fighters look to overthrow a society's goals through socially unacceptable means.

### Social Disorganization Theory

- ▶ Developed by researchers at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s,
- ▶ **Social disorganization theory** asserts that crime is most likely to occur in communities with weak social ties and the absence of social control. An individual who grows up in a poor neighbourhood with high rates of drug use, violence, teenage delinquency, and deprived parenting is more likely to become a criminal than an individual from a wealthy neighbourhood with a good school system and families who are involved positively in the community.
- ▶ According to the social disorganization theory individuals who grow up in impoverished areas are more likely to participate in deviant or criminal behaviours.
- ▶ Social disorganization theory points to broad social factors as the cause of deviance.
  - A person isn't born a criminal, but becomes one over time, often based on factors in his or her social environment.
- ▶ Research into social disorganization theory can greatly influence public policy. For instance, studies have found that children from disadvantaged communities who attend pre-school programs that teach basic social skills are significantly less likely to engage in criminal activity.

### Cultural Deviance Theory by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay

- ▶ **Cultural deviance theory** suggests that conformity to the prevailing cultural norms of lower-class society causes crime.
- ▶ Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942) found that violence and crime were at their worst in the middle of the city and gradually decreased the farther one travelled from the urban centre toward the suburbs.
  - Shaw and McKay noticed that this pattern matched the migration patterns of Chicago citizens. New immigrants, many of them poor and lacking knowledge of English, lived in neighbourhoods inside the city. As the urban population expanded, wealthier people moved to the suburbs, leaving behind the less privileged.
- ▶ Shaw and McKay concluded that socioeconomic status correlated to race and ethnicity resulted in a higher crime rate. The mix of cultures and values created a smaller society with different ideas of deviance, and those values and ideas were transferred from generation to generation.

The theory of Shaw and McKay has been further tested and expounded upon by Robert Sampson and Byron Groves (1989).

- ▶ They found that poverty, ethnic diversity, and family disruption in given localities had a strong positive correlation with social disorganization.
- ▶ They also determined that social disorganization was, in turn, associated with high rates of crime and delinquency—or deviance.
- ▶ Recent studies Sampson conducted with Lydia Bean (2006) revealed similar findings.
- ▶ High rates of poverty and single-parent homes correlated with high rates of juvenile violence.

### **CONFLICT THEORY**

- ▶ Conflict theory looks to social and economic factors as the causes of crime and deviance.
- ▶ Unlike functionalists, conflict theorists don't see these factors as positive functions of society, but as evidence of inequality in the system.
- ▶ They also challenge social disorganization theory and control theory, arguing that both ignore racial and socioeconomic issues and oversimplify social trends (Akers 1991).
- ▶ Conflict theorists also look for answers to the correlation of gender and race with wealth and crime.

#### **Karl Marx: An Unequal System**

- ▶ Conflict theory is derived greatly from the work of sociologist, philosopher, and revolutionary Karl Marx. Though Marx spoke little of deviance, his ideas created the foundation for conflict theorists who study the intersection of deviance and crime with wealth and power.
- ▶ This approach links crime to social inequalities that are built into capitalism. In a capitalist society, not everyone can gain wealth and status so some people commit crime to acquire the consumer goods and material possessions that others have and that the media promotes. The Marxist approach is the belief that the legal system operates in favour of the rich. For example, rich people who commit expense account fraud or tax evasion are less likely to be convicted than working-class people who commit benefit fraud.
- ▶ By centralizing vital resources into few hands, the bourgeois has the means to control the way society is regulated—from laws, to government, to other authority agencies—which gives the bourgeois the opportunity to maintain and expand their power in society.

#### **C. Wright Mills: The Power Elite**

Wright Mills (1956) described the existence of what he dubbed the **power elite**,

- ▶ A small group of wealthy and influential people at the top of society who hold the power and resources.
- ▶ Wealthy executives, politicians, celebrities, and military leaders often have access to national and international power, and in some cases, their decisions affect everyone in society.
- ▶ The rules of society are thus stacked in favour of a privileged few who manipulate them to stay on top. It is these people who decide what is criminal and what is not, and the effects are often felt most by those who have little power. Mills' theories explain why celebrities and powerful politicians can commit crimes with little or no legal retribution/payback/punishment.

#### **Crime and Social Class**

While crime is often associated with the underprivileged, crimes committed by the wealthy and powerful remain an under-punished and costly problem within society.

### **SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM**

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical approach that can be used to explain how societies and/or social groups come to view behaviours as deviant or conventional.

Labelling theory, Differential association, Social disorganization theory, and Control theory fall within the realm of symbolic interactionism.

#### **Labelling Theory**

- ▶ Although all of us violate norms from time to time, few people would consider themselves deviant.
- ▶ Those who do, however, have often been labelled "deviant" by society and have gradually come to believe it themselves.
- ✳ **Labelling theory** examines the ascribing of a deviant behaviour to another person by members of society.
  - ▶ What is considered deviant is determined not so much by the behaviours themselves or the people who commit them, but by the reactions of others to these behaviours.
  - ▶ As a result, what is considered deviant changes over time and can vary significantly across cultures.

Sociologist Edwin Lemert expanded on the concepts of labelling theory, identifying two types of deviance that affect identity formation.

**Primary deviance** is a violation of norms that does not result in any long-term effects on the individual's self-image or interactions with others.

- Speeding is a deviant act, but receiving a speeding ticket generally does not make others view you as a bad person, nor does it alter your own self-concept.
- Individuals who engage in primary deviance still maintain a feeling of belonging in society and are likely to continue to conform to norms in the future. Sometimes, in more extreme cases, primary deviance can change into secondary deviance.

**Secondary deviance** occurs when a person's self-concept and behaviour begin to change after his or her actions are labelled as deviant by members of society.

- The person may begin to take on and fulfil the role of a "deviant" as an act of rebellion against the society that has labelled that individual as such. For example, consider a high school student who often cuts class and gets into fights. The student is reprimanded frequently by teachers and school staff, and soon enough, he develops a reputation as a "troublemaker."
- As a result, the student starts acting out even more and breaking more rules; he has adopted the "troublemaker" label and embraced this deviant identity. Secondary deviance can be so strong that it bestows a **master status** on an individual. (*A label that describes the chief characteristic of an individual*).
  - Some people see themselves primarily as doctors, artists, or grandfathers. Others see themselves as beggars, convicts, or addicts.

### **Edwin Sutherland: Differential Association**

Deviant behaviour may develop among people as a result of differential association.

The **differential association theory by Edwin Sutherland** states that: -

- Individuals learn deviant behaviour from those close to them who provide models of and opportunities for deviance.
- Deviance is less a personal choice and more a result of differential socialization processes. A twin whose friends are sexually active is more likely to view sexual activity as acceptable.
- Sutherland's theory may account for why crime is multigenerational.
- A longitudinal study beginning in the 1960s found that the best predictor of antisocial and criminal behaviour in children was whether their parents had been convicted of a crime (Todd and Jury 1996). Children who were younger than 10 when their parents were convicted were more likely than other children to engage in spousal abuse and criminal behaviour by their early thirties.
- Even when taking socioeconomic factors such as dangerous neighbourhoods, poor school systems, and overcrowded housing into consideration, researchers found that parents were the main influence on the behaviour of their offspring (Todd and Jury 1996).

### **FEMINISTS PERSPECTIVE ON CRIME AND DEVIANCE**

- Feminist theorists hold that previous theories on deviance have centred on male deviance and thus are inadequate when it comes to understanding female deviance and crime.
- Traditional studies of deviant and/or criminal women tended to examine activities that we would now question being considered crimes, and generally these were linked with sexist stereotypes of women's social roles. This set a pattern of viewing women's deviance in terms of either sexual behaviour (i.e., teenage promiscuity, prostitution) or behaviour resulting from unstable emotions (i.e., alcoholism, drug abuse). Often they go together—female junkies and alcoholics are presumed to be sexually promiscuous as well (Anderson 2000).
- Feminist theories of deviance tend to challenge other mainstream theories on the grounds that the questions sociologists ask about crime and deviance are incomplete because they fail to take into consideration the context of gender, race, sexuality, and class relations. Of concern are ways in which these factors intersect to produce patterns of, and responses to, deviant behaviour. As seen previously, the ideology of femininity constructs females in a particular way.
- Since the natural role for a woman is seen as that of a wife and mother, females are thought to be in need of more protection and care. This is particularly the case when it comes to sexuality. While young men are expected to "sow wild oats," girls' virginity is to be protected. Therefore, sexual activity in young girls is

much more likely to be labelled as promiscuous (i.e., deviant) and in need of control, than is the case in young males. Feminists point to the double standard in viewing behaviour as deviant in women but not deviant in men.

- Social control theory has been applied by other feminists to examine why, considering unequal access to social goals, more women do *not* become criminal. Heidensohn (1996) suggests that it is because of the ways in which women are doubly controlled—by ideologies of appropriate behaviour for women in society and by their role in the family. Being controlled in both the public and the private spheres ensures that they are likely to be more conformist than men. Since traditional theories of deviance have tended to account for male crime and deviance, feminists have extended these theories to fit the female experience.
- The perspective advanced by labelling and conflict theorists forms quite a contrast to the functionalist approach to deviance. Functionalists view standards of deviant behaviour as merely reflecting cultural norms, whereas feminist, conflict, and labelling theorists point out that the most powerful groups in a society can shape laws and standards and determine who is (or is not) prosecuted as a criminal. Thus, the label “deviant” is rarely applied to the corporate executive whose decisions lead to large-scale environmental pollution. Agents of social control and powerful groups can generally impose their own self-serving definitions of deviance on the general-public.
- Functionalists contend that people must respect social norms if any group or society is to survive. In their view, societies literally could not function if massive numbers of people defied standards of appropriate conduct. By contrast, conflict theorists maintain that “successful functioning” of a society will consistently benefit the powerful and work to the disadvantage of other groups. They point out, for example, that widespread resistance to social norms was necessary to overturn the institution of slavery in the United States.
- Feminism is best understood as both a world view and a social movement that encompasses assumptions and beliefs about the origins and consequences of engendered social organisation as well as strategic directions and actions for social change. Three feminist schools of thought or paradigms have emerged regarding deviance.

### **Liberal feminism**

- Feminists have presented new analyses of traditional sociological theories of deviance. For example, liberal feminists have critiqued Merton's anomie theory for its failure to note that women experience both reduced societal goals and the means to achieve them when compared to those of men. Just as women are confronted with obstacles in their climb to the top of the corporate ladder, so are they limited in their opportunities to engage in deviant acts such as corporate crime
- Women's deviance is a rational response to the gender discrimination that women experience at work, in marriage and other relationships e.g. lack of opportunity leads to lack of education or employment which led to deviance.
- Liberal feminism was conceived within a liberal bourgeoisie tradition that called for women's equality of opportunity and freedom of choice.
- Liberal feminists see gender inequality emerging from the creation of separate and distinct spheres of influence and traditional attitudes about the appropriate role of men and women in society.
- Liberals do not believe the system to be inherently unequal, discrimination is not systematic. Rather, man and women can work together to androgenize gender roles i.e. blend male and female traits and characteristics and eliminate outdated policies and practices that discriminate against women.
- Affirmative action, the equal rights amendment and other equal opportunity laws or policies are advocated as redistributive measures until a meritocratic gender restructuring of society occurs.

### **Socialist feminism**

- Women are exploited by capitalism and patriarchy. Capitalism is dominated by men therefore women are left with lower paying jobs and fewer economic resources, this leads to deviance e.g. shoplifting, prostitution.
- For socialist, gender oppression is an obvious feature of capitalist societies.
- Depending whether one is a socialist women (Marxist-feminist) or a socialist-feminist, however, the weight that one gives to capitalism as a necessary or sufficient cause of that oppression will vary.
- Socialist feminists attempt a synthesis between two systems of domination, class and patriarchy (male supremacy)
- Gender difference as a defining characteristic of power and privilege in a capitalist society can only be attacked by constructing a completely different society, one that is free of gender and class stratification.
- Socialist feminists hold the view that since gender relations are not "natural," but rather produced by social, cultural, and historical conditions, gendered patterns of deviance will reflect these conditions. For example, the social acceptability of smoking for women (and the labelling of some women smokers as deviants) has been shaped by history, class, and sexuality. A number of studies of women convicted of criminal offences have concluded that these women were seen as doubly deviant—deviant for breaking laws and also 'unfeminine' and 'unnatural' because they have offended rules of feminine behaviour. Since girls are socialized to see marriage, motherhood and domesticity as their main goals, if they reject the societal view of appropriate feminine behaviour, they endanger their chances of achieving these goals.

### Radical feminism

- Patriarchy i.e. male domination over females keeps women more tied to family and the home therefore, women are more likely to be singled out as deviant when they separate themselves from domestic roles e.g. although the law states that the man and woman are equally guilty, the prostitute is more likely to be arrested and charged than her male customer
- The origins of patriarchy and the subordination of women therein, are seen by radical feminists to rest in male aggression and control of women's sexuality.
- Men are inherently more aggressive than women, who, because of their relative size disadvantages and dependency on men during child bearing years, are easy to dominate and control.

Radical feminists have analysed patriarchy as the key to understanding female crime and deviance. **Patriarchy** controls women's bodies and minds, and sets in place oppressive social institutions, such as the family and the law, in order to maintain control. Since men control social institutions and ideologies, they are in a position to define what is considered deviance. This can be seen in the regulation of prostitution, which results in a higher rate of arrest and conviction for the female prostitute than for the male.

### CRIME

A **crime** is an **illegal act** that is punishable by law. If a person commits a crime and is detected, they could be arrested, charged and prosecuted. When found guilty, they will receive a sentence such as a community service, an order, fine or imprisonment. Some illegal acts are not necessarily seen as deviant. For example, parking cars on double yellow lines or using a mobile phone whilst driving, even though these activities are against the law.

#### **How is a crime being different from other types of deviance?**

- Although deviance is a violation of social norms, it's not always punishable, and it's not necessarily bad.
- **Crime**, on the other hand, is a behaviour that violates official law and is punishable through formal sanctions.
- ✿ Walking to class backwards is a deviant behaviour. Driving with a blood alcohol percentage over the state's limit is a crime.
- All societies have informal and formal ways of maintaining social control.
  - Within these systems of norms, societies have **legal codes** that maintain formal social control through laws, which are rules adopted and enforced by a political authority.
  - Those who violate these rules incur negative formal sanctions.



- Normally, punishments are relative to the degree of the crime and the importance to society of the value underlying the law. However, there are other factors that influence criminal sentencing.

### Types of Crimes

- Not all crimes are given equal weight. Society generally socializes its members to view certain crimes as more severe than others. For example, most people would consider murdering someone to be far worse than stealing a wallet and would expect a murderer to be punished more severely than a thief.
- Crimes may be classified as one of two types based on their severity.
  - a) **Violent crimes** (also known as "crimes against a person") are based on the use of force or the threat of force. Rape, murder, and armed robbery fall under this category.
  - b) **Nonviolent crimes** involve the destruction or theft of property, but do not use force or the threat of force. Because of this, they are also sometimes called "property crimes." Larceny, car theft, and vandalism are all types of nonviolent crimes. If you use a crowbar to break into a car, you are committing a nonviolent crime; if you mug someone with the crowbar, you are committing a violent crime.
  - 1) When we think of crime, we often picture **street crime**, or offenses committed by ordinary people against other people or organizations, usually in public spaces.
  - 2) An often overlooked category is **corporate crime**, or crime committed by white-collar workers in a business environment.
    - Embezzlement misuse/misappropriation
    - insider trading, and
    - identity theft are all types of corporate crime.
- Although these types of offenses rarely receive the same amount of media coverage as street crimes, they can be far more damaging.
- The current economic problems in Zimbabwe can arguably be attributed to corporate crime.
- 3) An often-debated third type of crime is **victimless crime**. These are called victimless because the perpetrator is not explicitly harming another person. As opposed to battery or theft, which clearly have a victim, a crime like drinking a beer at age 20 or selling a sexual act do not result in injury to anyone other than the individual who engages in them, although they are illegal.

While some claim acts like these are victimless, others argue that they actually do harm society.

- Prostitution may foster abuse toward women by clients or pimps.
- Drug use may increase the likelihood of employee absences.

Such debates highlight how the deviant and criminal nature of actions develops through ongoing public discussion.

### Hate Crimes

Attacks based on a person's race, religion, gender or other characteristics are known as **hate crimes**.

### Measurement and patterns of crime

Crime statistics have come up with different and conflicting conclusions. This is mainly because the ways through which crime statistics is obtained have their own different disadvantages.

### Strengths and weaknesses of official crime statistics

#### 1) Police crime figures

These are official statistics recorded and published by the police. These are useful as they: -

- Are easy to access.
- Can be used to identify trends.
- Show the backgrounds of criminals.

In the past these have been taken to be accurate until sociologists began to question their reliability as: -

- Official police records only have crime known to police yet not all crime is reported to police.
  - Individuals do not report crime to police for several reasons like: -
- ▶ Lack of faith in police investigation and solutions
- ▶ They have been intimidated by the perpetrator.
- ▶ Shock, fear and embarrassment of the victim.
- ▶ Seeing the crime as trivial or fear police see the crime as trivial.

- Police do not record all crime that is reported to them because: -
  - ▶ Officers use their own discretion to consider crime worth recording.
  - ▶ Officers may want to run away from crime that has a lot of paper work.
  - ▶ Cases that do not have enough evidence may not be taken as crime.
- Official rules on defining what constitutes crime worth recording change from time to time.

### **Victim survey and Self-report**

- ☀ **Victim surveys:** - are anonymous surveys of individuals, asking for details of crimes committed against them even if these were not reported to police within a set period. They are more representative than police records as they include figures of reported and unreported crimes. They also tend to use a large sample and have a high response rate.

→ Sociologist Jock Young (1988) questioned the validity of victim survey by pointing out that each respondent's definition of what's crime is different ... some people are also more willing to reveal their experiences than others. Although Young accepts victim surveys have a place in research he maintains that they do not give a full picture of crime.

- ☀ **Self-report studies:** - these are anonymous surveys asking individuals about crimes they have committed. They representative of the population like victim surveys. Their major drawback is that is that respondents may not believe that their crimes won't be reported to others including the police however they are important in searching who commits crime.

### **Social distribution of Crime**

Some groups of people seem to commit crime more than others or at least get caught out more than other people. Common trend seems to be that: -

- Young people are convicted of crime more than older people.
- Men are convicted of crime more than women.
- Urban areas have much more crime than rural areas.
- Most criminals are people with a lowers class background.
- People ethnic minority background has more chances of arrest and conviction.

### **Patterns of Crime**

#### **Gender and crime**

According to official statistics, men commit far more crime than women.

Overall, nearly 5 times as many men as women found guilty or cautioned.

#### **Why do women commit less crime?**

- **Socialization.** Boys and girls are socialized differently. Girls are expected to be more passive, while boys are encouraged to be more active and also to be tough and be able to fight when necessary. These differences may make it more likely that boys will get into trouble with the police later.
- **Opportunity.** Females often have less opportunity to commit crime than men. As children and teenagers, girls are usually more closely supervised; parents will want to know where they are, what they are doing and when they will be home. Boys are often given (or take) more freedom. Later, women are usually responsible for looking after children. This also restricts opportunities for crime.

#### **Statistics underestimate female crime**

- The statistics only record crimes reported to the police and recorded as crimes.
- It may be that the types of crime women to commit are less likely to be reported; perhaps women are better at concealing the evidence.

#### **Women committing more crimes than in the past**

- The number of offences by women has been rising faster than the rise in crimes in general. It seems that women are committing more offences that used to be the case.
- Explanations for this can be developed from the reasons given above for women's lower rates of crime:
  - Changing socialization -- the socialization of girls today includes the importance of being assertive and resourceful, rather than always relying on a male. The media have played a part in this, for example through role models such as the Spice Girls.
  - Greater opportunity -- women now have similar opportunities than men, including opportunities to commit crime. They go out to work more, and go out more at night.



### **Women in the criminal justice system**

- The vast majority are in prison for non-violent offences, often for not paying fines so that they had money to look after their children.
- Our women treated more leniently by the police and courts? The idea that they do has been called the chivalry factor, taking up the idea, strong in the past in culture, that men should protect women. The suggestion is that the police are more likely to caution rather than charge women, and that the courts are likely to impose lighter sentences, particularly if the woman has or is expecting children (it is not usually considered relevant if a man on trial has children).
- An alternative theory says that, for some offences, women are actually treated more harshly. This happens when the offence involves neglect or abuse of children. Because we see caring for children as a woman's natural role, it seems unnatural and outrageous when this does not happen.

### **Women as victims**

- There are crimes of which women are much more likely than men to be victims. These include rape, sexual assault and domestic violence.
- These are all offences that are believed to be seriously underestimated in official statistics because the victims do not always report them.
- Feminists and others have argued that the criminal justice system has not taken these offences seriously enough in the past.
- The police and courts have treated insensitively women who have been raped. In court women have been questioned about their sex lives and even being cross-examined by the rapist.
- Women are afraid of being victims of these crimes, and this can affect their lives. For example, they may avoid going out especially alone, at night or to certain areas. While these are sensible precautions, most assaults and rapes are not by strangers but by people the victim already knows.

### **Age and crime: juvenile delinquents**

#### **Are the statistics accurate?**

- Self-report studies and other research tend to confirm that young people commit a lots of offences, though usually fairly minor ones. However, there some reasons for doubting that this is the whole picture:
- Teenagers attract close social control, watched over by parents and at school by teachers. The police also see them as potential troublemakers. So it may be that offences they commit are highly likely to be noticed.
- On the other hand, crime by older people may be under recorded; they are more likely to be in occupations where white-collar crime, which we know to be under recorded, is possible.

#### **What is delinquency?**

- Delinquency refers to the undesirable antisocial behaviour of young people. It may include some crime, but it also covers deviant behaviour that is not criminal, such as defying authority, chewing tin from school and so on. It can cover staying out late, wearing, outrageous dress or tattoos and body piercing. For girls, sexual activity under the age of 16 may be a cause for concern.

#### **Explanations of delinquency**

- Some of the factors linked to delinquency are:
- family problems such as the breakdown of the parents' marriage
- failure at school
- Use of alcohol and drugs.

#### **Peer groups and subcultures**

- Peer groups may encourage delinquent behaviour. Sometimes the peer groups they have clear norms and values that indicate the existence of a subculture.

#### **Social control**

- It has been argued that social control is weaker over teenagers than other age groups. Adults usually have responsibilities that limit the scope they have to commit crimes. They have to look after children and have to pay for a house, a car and so on. Teenagers are not tied down in these ways; they do not usually have to earn a living or support and care for others.

#### **What can be done about delinquency?**

- Curfews -- young children not to be out without an adult after a set time.
- Parental responsibility -- encouraging parents to intervene more to try to prevent delinquency. Part of this may be to make parents pay compensation to victims of their children's crimes.
- Providing activities to keep young people occupied such as afterschool clubs.
- Reducing exclusions from school -- on the grounds that being allowed to stay on and allow someone to move away from trouble by being able to study and perhaps get qualifications.

### Minority ethnic groups and crime

- Minority ethnic groups of people do commit substantially more crime
  - That the criminal justice system is racist and works against them, for example by giving harsher sentences.
  - If minority group of people do commit more crime this can be in response to an unjust, racist system.
  - They tend to live in inner city areas where opportunities are limited. They do not do as well at school on average as white children, and suffer high rates of unemployment, partly as a result of discrimination.
- Crime then may be a way of surviving in difficult circumstances.

In Britain the relationship between Afro- Caribbean people and the police has been a source of concern for many years. The police have tended to accept the evidence of the official statistics, that black people are more likely to be involved in crime. They have policed areas such as Brixton in London sometimes in a very heavy handed way. Young blacks are seven times as likely to be stopped and searched as white people. There are few black police officers. Sometimes the police feel like invaders in enemy territory while the local population feels they are victimized and harassed. The result is to increase the number of young Afro-Caribbean people get into trouble.

### Asian people and crime

The proportion of British Asian people in prison is roughly the same as their proportion in the population. Compared to Afro-Caribbean people, there has been less concern about Asian people. They are seen as more law-abiding as result of:

Greater economic success (though this applies much more to Indian people than to Pakistani or Bangladeshi people)

- stronger family and community ties providing effective social control
- a distinct culture which provides a feeling of belonging and an alternative source of status
- the strength of religious belief

### The criminal justice system

There is evidence that the criminal justice system treats ethnic groups differently, both as offenders and victims. Black people are more to be charged rather than caution, and to get tougher sentences for the same offences, and whites. On the other hand, crimes of racial harassment, violence and even murder, of which minorities are victims, are often not properly investigated.

### Social class and crime

- It seems that there is a strong link between a person's position in the social class hierarchy and their likelihood of committing a crime. In simple terms, the lower their class position, the higher their criminality. Indeed, working-class young people have the crime rate that is about eight times higher than that of upper or middle class youth.
- When you look at the prison population, it is a similar story, with working-class people being hugely overrepresented. Crime rates in inner city areas and council estates are also typically higher than in moral areas or the suburbs. These areas, of course, are largely working class.
- However, many sociologists believe that the crime rates in relation to class say more about the structure of society rather than the reality of the situation

### **SOCIAL CONTROL:** -

When a person violates a social norm, what happens?

All societies practice **social control** which is the regulation and enforcement of norms. A **criminal justice system** is an organization that exists to enforce a legal code. There are three branches criminal justice system in Zimbabwe: the police, the courts, and the corrections system.

**Police:-** are a civil force in charge of enforcing laws and public order at a federal, state, or community level. State police have the authority to enforce state-wide laws, including regulating traffic on highways.

**Courts:**—Once a crime has been committed and a violator is identified by the police, the case goes to the court. A **court** is a system that has the authority to make decisions based on law.

The **correctional system**, more commonly known as the prison system, is tasked with supervising individuals who have been arrested, convicted, and sentenced for a criminal offense.

- ▶ The goal of social control is to maintain **social order**, an arrangement of practices and behaviours on which society's members base their daily lives. Think of social order as school rules and regulations handbook and social control as a Headmaster.
- When a student violates school rules and regulations (norms) the headmaster steps in to enforce the rules (Social control).
- ▶ The means of enforcing rules are known as **sanctions**.
- ▶ Sanctions can be **positive** as well as **negative**.
  - **Positive sanctions** are rewards given for conforming to norms. A promotion at work is a positive sanction for working hard. Positive sanctions encourage the behaviour that has been rewarded.
  - **Negative sanctions** are punishments for violating norms. Being arrested is a punishment for shoplifting. Negative sanctions discourage behaviour that violates society's norms.

Sociologists also classify sanctions as **formal** or **informal**.

**Informal sanctions** emerge in face-to-face social interactions. For example, swearing loudly in church may draw disapproving looks or even verbal reprimands (**negative informal sanctions**), whereas behaviour that is seen as positive—such as helping an old man carry grocery bags across the street—may receive positive informal reactions, such as a smile or pat on the back (**positive informal sanctions**).

**Formal sanctions**, on the other hand, are ways to officially recognize and enforce norm violations.

→ If a student violates her college's code of conduct, for example, she might be expelled. (**Negative formal sanction**)

→ Someone who speaks inappropriately to the boss could be fired. (**Negative formal sanction**)

→ Someone who commits a crime may be arrested or imprisoned. (**Negative formal sanction**)

On the positive side, a soldier who saves a life may receive an official commendation. (**Positive formal sanction**)

### **Social control**

Social control refers to the ways in which society tries to ensure that its members conform to laws, rules and norms; that is, to make sure that they do not commit acts of crime and deviance. The forms social control take can be divided into the **formal** and the **informal**. Social control means the creation of laws and rules and using them to control people's behaviour. The agencies of formal social control include the government, the police, judges and the courts and prisons. Informal social control means how we are persuaded to conform most of the time through being taught and reminded about what is acceptable and what is not.

**Agencies of informal social control are also the agencies of socialization. They include:**

**The family**— family members, particularly your parents, are very effective at discouraging "deviant" behaviour. This is especially true when it comes to promoting or forbidding gender specific behaviour- parents **manipulate** their children into behaving appropriately (eg it may be acceptable for a boy to do things a girl would not be permitted to do).

**The education system**— teachers employ many informal sanctions to discourage certain behaviour. This can range from a "look" to a more formal punishment such as a detention for not completing work. **The Hidden curriculum** can also be employed by teachers to encourage or discourage certain behaviour from girls and boys.

**Peer groups**— we all have a need to "**fit in**" with others and join a "**cultural comfort zone**." The peer group is very effective in discouraging inappropriate behaviour as those members of the group who do not conform are ostracized from the group.

**The workplace**— certain standards of behaviour are expected from certain occupations. The work place provides formal sanctions to those who do not conform to this behaviour.

**The mass media**— the media presents images, perhaps in the form of stereotypes, of how individuals and groups are expected to behave. The media informally sanctions deviance by broadcasting acceptable and unacceptable standards.

**Religion**—this is a very powerful form of social control to people who believe. In the past religions provided formal systems of control as you could be sent to prison for disobeying religious laws. Nowadays, religious controls are less formal and have an effect only on the religious (the threat of being sent to hell is still a

powerful motivator for good behaviour for many!) By teaching what behaviour is not acceptable, and what the sanctions will be, they are agents of social control. Informal social control works so well that most people behave in an acceptable way most of the time. When informal social control doesn't work, for more social control takes over and deals with the offenders.

### Agencies of formal social control

#### The legislature

Members of parliament are responsible for debating on issues or bills that may be passed into law. These laws may be forms of social control such as POSA and AIPA

#### The police

The role of the police force is to enforce the law and to investigate crimes.

- To enable them to do this, the police have rights that all very citizens do not; they can arrest people, tell them to disperse (move on), and use reasonable force if they are not obeyed.
- Marxist sociologists see society as deeply divided they view the police as one of the ways in which the ruling class maintains its power and wealth.
  - The police are servants of the ruling class.
  - They enforce laws the ruling class has passed, and make sure that the working class does not threaten the system.
  - From this point of view, the creation of police forces was connected to the rise of capitalism rather than of industrialism.
  - The police have been used against working-class and protest movements.
  - ⊕ The police however do not only serve capitalism but also protect the working class against crime. This is why there is a rather ambivalent attitude to the police; many people are rather suspicious of them, disliking the feeling of being watched over, yet they turn to the police when they need them.
  - ⊕ Although the main duties of the police are solving crime, they spend a lot of time on other work. A police officer is as likely to be in the police station, writing reports and carrying out administrative work as to be on patrol. Traffic and dealing with accidents also take up a lot of time.

#### The judiciary

This refers to the courts, which try those accused of crimes and convict and sentence those who are found guilty.

- Most serious cases are dealt with by **High court**, with a judge and jury while minor offences are dealt with by **Magistrates Courts**, which are presided over by a magistrate.
- The courts have a variety of **sanctions (or sentences)** available to them when someone is found guilty of breaking the law -
  - ⊕ **Absolute discharge**-- the person is guilty but no action is taken against him or her.
  - ⊕ **Conditional discharge** -- no action is taken, but if the person commits another offence he or she will be sentenced for both the new crime and the first one.
  - ⊕ **Fine**-- the offender has to pay a sum of money. A fine is the punishment for about three quarters of all those found guilty.
  - ⊕ **Probation order**-- an offender who is on probation is supervised by a probation officer for between six months and three years. This means the offender is being checked up on regularly and also that he or she gets help to stop him or her offending again.
  - ⊕ **Community service order**-- the offender has to do work which is helpful to the community without being paid. Sentences are for some hours of community service
  - ⊕ **Prison**-- this is reserved for the most serious offences.

#### The penal system

This refers to the people and organizations that deal with offenders. These include prisons and probation service. Their role is to deal with people who have been found guilty of offences. The penal system has several purposes:

- To punish individuals who have been found guilty and provide **retribution** for the victims of crime.

- To **rehabilitate** offenders, to try to ensure that they will not commit further crimes. To achieve this, prisons may offer training and education, teaching skills so that offenders will have a chance to get a job and "go straight."
- To **deter** -- the punishment acts as a warning to others of what they can expect if they break the law. The media play a part in this by reporting what sentences offenders have been given.
- To **protect** members of the public from potentially dangerous individuals.

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Recently there has been much debate about whether or not the penal system is effective in achieving these aims. The debate has particularly focused on the prison system and whether or not prisons rehabilitate, deter, protect or even effectively punish offenders. The fact that a lot of prisoners reoffend and sent back to prison may suggest that the prison system lacks effectiveness. However, it is difficult to think of another form of punishment which would be more or as effective given the fact that the death penalty is outlawed in many countries around the world (the USA is an obvious exception).



## Topic 21 Mass Media

- Perspectives on mass media
- Ownership and control of mass media
- Media content
- Media effects



# MASS MEDIA

Mass media refers to any type of communication, be it written, spoken, or broadcast, that reaches a large audience. This includes radio, television, film, the Internet, magazines, newspapers, or any other forum in which messages are disseminated on a large scale. Media messages are quite influential on individual people, as well as society as a whole, which has led sociologists to refer to our culture as a "mediated culture". Media does not only reflect culture, but creates it as well. The influence and reach of mass media is countless and everywhere.

- Although mass media communicates the same message to large numbers of people, interpretation is not always the same for the receivers.
  - Thus there is no mass audience. Audience vary according to gender, class, ethnicity and religion.
  - Postmodernists see media message as polysemic; they can be interpreted in very different ways by different individuals.

## Perspectives on Mass media

### 1. Functional approach: -

For mass media, this means examining how audiences interact with media and how they use media

Different media provide different primary uses.

- **Macro analysis:** how media functions for the society as a whole
- **Microanalysis:** how media functions for the individual

Societal level (*macro analysis*)

- Society requires certain communication needs be met.
- Some are handled by the mass media.
- We must consider the consequences of performing these functions by media.

**Dysfunctions:** negative consequences

Media functions are not mutually exclusive

## Functions of Mass Media

The mass media serves several general and many specific functions. In general, the mass media serves information, interpretation, instructive, bonding, and diversion functions:

- 1) **Surveillance/Information function.** We have a need for information to satisfy curiosity, reduce uncertainty, and better understand how we fit into the world. The amount and availability of information is now overwhelming compared to in the past when a few television networks, local radio stations, and newspapers competed to keep us informed. The media saturation has led to increased competition to provide information, which creates the potential for news media outlets, for example, to report information prematurely, inaccurately, or partially.

### Consequences

- Speed of propagating truth and error
  - Most news not verifiable by receiver
  - Credibility
  - Anxiety
  - Status Conferral
- 2) **Interpretation function.** Media outlets interpret messages in more or less explicit and ethical ways. Newspaper editorials have long been explicit interpretations of current events, and now cable television and radio personalities offer social, cultural, and political commentary that are full of subjective interpretations. Although some of them operate in ethical grey areas because they use formats that make them seem like traditional news programs, most are open about their motives.



## Consequences

- Wide range of contrasting viewpoints
- Weigh all sides before making decision
- Greater depth of expertise available
- No guarantee interpretations are accurate
- People become overly dependent on media for interpretation

3) **Socialization and Instructive function.** Some media outlets exist to cultivate knowledge by teaching instead of just relaying information.

- TV has great potential in socialization
- Violent or stereotypical content
- The History Channel, the National Geographic Channel, and the Discovery Channel, serve more instructive functions.

4) **Linkage or Bonding function.** Media outlets can bring people closer together, which serves the bonding function. For example, people who share common values and interests can gather on online forums, and masses of people can be brought together while watching coverage of a tragic event like 9/11 or a deadly tornado outbreak.

## Consequences

- Build new groups or communities
  - Hate groups or terrorist groups use of Internet
  - Transmission of Values (Socialization)
  - People adopt behaviors or values of a group
  - Stabilize society by creating bonds
  - Encourages the status quo
  - Media can help enforce social norms
- 5) **Diversion function.** We all use the media to escape our day-to-day lives, to distract us from our upcoming exam, or to help us relax. When we are being distracted, amused, or relaxed, the media is performing the diversion function.

## 6) Entertainment

Importance of this function has grown as worldwide and this is also reflected as Zimbabweans now have more leisure time

## HOW PEOPLE USE THE MEDIA

### Uses-and-gratifications:

#### Individual level (*microanalysis*)

- People have certain needs or desires
  - Needs satisfied by media and non-media sources
- Four categories of media uses, reflecting needs.
- Cognition/understanding
  - Diversion
    - ▶ Stimulation/inspiration
    - ▶ Relaxation/recreation
    - ▶ Emotional Release (catharsis)
  - Social Utility

- ▶ Conversational eg whatsapp
- ▶ Para-social Relationships

- Withdrawal

#### **Assumptions of functional approach:**

- Audiences are active
- Needs provide motivation for media use
- Other sources exist to satisfy needs
- People are aware of their needs and can verbalize them (surveys)

#### **6. The market model**

- Media audience is seen as made up of consumers who influence media output.
- Media output is influenced by providing profit to the owners.
- Owners i.e. controllers and producers seek audiences.
- They compete to provide what is demanded; a wide range of opinions are offered and only the illegal and the unsellable are excluded.
- Selection for broadcasting and publication of news is done on professional basis and is seen as having objective reality.
- In the United States free press is seen as being watchdog for power abuse.

#### **7. The mass manipulative model**

- According to Cohen and Young it is the opposite of the market model.
- Audiences are passive and uncritical recipients of media messages.
- Instrumental Marxists like Miliband see the ruling class having fairly direct control over media production.
- Structuralist Marxists such as Althusser and Marcuse see journalists and editors as being influenced by ruling class ideology and willingly conforming to the interests of capitalists.

#### **8. The interactionist model**

- The media reflects existing attitudes of the audience as well as helping to create and reinforce a consensual view of the world. Technical and ideological factors both influence selection and presentation of news; news is seen as socially constructed rather than a neutral description of real events. Cohen and Young describe the process as "news manufacture" and the outcome as "agenda setting".

#### **9. Marxist theories**

Marxists see ownership and control of media by a capitalist ruling class as important in understanding mass media

- Media transmit the ideas of the ruling class.
- They use mass media to promote their products to make profits and to persuade people to accept the capitalist system.
- They own the means of production (TV Stations, Newspapers, and Publishing houses etc.)
- Huge corporations dominate the media leading to monopolisation. This is achieved through:-
  - High levels of expenditure:- large production at low cost which can only be achieved by large corporations.
  - Synergy; single product can be used as the basis of other media products for example film sound tracks used on a film.
  - Branding; financial muscle is used to market branded products to make them appeal to consumers.
  - Globalisation; selling products worldwide, some TV channels can reach many parts of the world.

#### **Ownership and control of mass media**

- The media is owned and controlled by a few powerful companies and individuals.
  - The individuals who own and control those companies have huge power influence in society. They can control information we receive if they want to. In Italy Silvio Berlusconi who owns a lot of media

outlets and happened to be the Prime Minister and Party leader at some point. People claimed he was able to use his influence to control the reporting of his political party and the opposition.

#### ✿ **Marxists say Media ownership controls media content**

- Media owners control what we see in the media:-
  - They exploit their power position to manipulate the content of the media.
  - Capitalist media owners tell news editors stories to cover and views to put across.
  - The media ends up putting across the views that serve the interest of capitalism.
- The media reflects the ideas of the ruling class (including the media owners).
  - Media reinforces and broadcast the world view of the elite.
  - The views of the ruling class are presented as the natural, common-sense views society should hold.
  - It means one set of ideas dominates over other ideas, a phenomenon known as cultural Hegemony/supremacy.

#### ✿ **Pluralism say media reflects the values and beliefs of society**

- Society gets the media it wants; media outlets respond to market demand if not they go out of business.
- In this case the market matters no matter who owns the media
- Pluralists do acknowledge the media will express some opinion more than others but they see it as a reflection of the most common views in society rather than bias from journalists, editors and owners.

#### **Media content**

##### **Pluralism: - media content reflects diversity in society.**

- Society is made up of different and interacting parts and the state oversees and keeps them in check.
- Believe that the content of media reflects the values of society
- Any media that reflects the values in society will be popular and stay in business and any that does not will go.
- Media regulates itself.

##### **Postmodernism: - media content reflects a consumerist identity.**

- Peoples' identity comes from what they buy and what kind of culture and media they choose to consume.
- Media show people what they can buy and what kind of life style they can choose from.
- There is no dominant set of ideas; society presents many choice and alternative opinions.
- According to Jean Baudrillard (1981, 1994) everything has been replaced by simulacra. Baudrillard called this hyper reality where media images take the place of reality.
- Made up images were used to give people the impression that they could tell reality from simulacrum when in fact they could not.
  - **Simulacrum:** - something that looks real but isn't; it's like a copy but without any connection to the original. According to postmodernists simulacra actually replaces reality.
- In the media a piece of information or an image can be distorted intentionally in order to make it appear correct to viewers; it's made less true or appear truer.
  - **News is influenced by practical constraints like time, space, and money.**
  - **News is influenced by the values and practices of Journalists**
  - **News is influenced by society; it's socially constructed.**

#### **Media effects**

Chances are that we are exposed to mass media during most of our time. The influence and reach of mass media is countless and everywhere. Everyone is exposed to it, and it affects how we feel about everything, including products, people, events, and even ourselves, and influences our sense of what is and isn't important.

#### **b. The hypodermic model: media directly influences audience.**

This model assumes that audiences passively accepted media messages and would exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages. For example, following the radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds* in 1938 (which was a fictional news report of an alien invasion), some people panicked and believed the story to be true.

- 1) Media messages are directly injected to the audience as if by a syringe.

- 2) Media can act like a drug or narcotic that changes behaviour directly (narcotic effect of media) demonstrated by Bandura's social learning theory. In his 1963 psychological experiments Bandura found out that boys learnt imitate aggressive behaviour in the films they had watched.
- 3) Many politicians and other commentators are influenced by this model

#### **Criticism of the hypodermic model**

- Audiences are very diverse and react in different ways
- Long term and short term effects may differ
- Ignores different uses of media TV programmes may be used only as background noise.
- Ignores other media effects; watching violent films may act an outlet of aggression rather than a cause of it.

#### **c. Agenda-Setting Theory**

Unlike the extreme views of the direct effects model or hypodermic syringe needle, the agenda-setting theory of media stated that mass media determine the issues that concern the public rather than the public's views.

- Under this theory, the issues that receive the most attention from media become the issues that the public discusses, debates, and demands action on.
- Media is determines what issues and stories the public thinks about.
- When the media fails to address a particular issue, it becomes marginalized in the minds of the public (Hanson).
- When critics claim that a particular media outlet has an agenda, they are drawing on this theory.
- Agendas can range from a perceived liberal bias in the news media to the propagation of cutthroat capitalist ethics in films.
  - *For example, the agenda-setting theory explains such phenomena as the rise of public opinion against smoking. Before the mass media began taking an antismoking stance, smoking was considered a personal health issue. By promoting antismoking sentiments through advertisements, public relations campaigns, and a variety of media outlets, the mass media moved smoking into the public arena, making it a public health issue rather than a personal health issue (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). More recently, coverage of natural disasters has been prominent in the news.*
- However, as news coverage decreases, so does the general public's interest.

#### **d. The two step flow model**

According to Merton (1946) and Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) media effects may not be direct but messages are interpreted by key individuals who in turn influence others

- Step 1 media message reaches the audience
- Step 2 media message is interpreted by the audience and it influences them.
  - Opinion leaders are key members in society whose reactions directly influences others and these play an important role by interpreting the media message for others then shape what influence the message might have.
  - Advertising campaigns use this two-step flow model Vernetta (2004) shows how the women's fashion industry uses opinion leaders.
  - According to a study by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) on media influence on American voters people follow the opinion leaders' views on who they should vote for, but the opinion leaders themselves often got their ideas straight from the mass media.
  - The two step flow model may be modified by the multi-step flow model which recognizes that there may be several stages in the interpretation of media messages. Hobson (1990) shows how discussions of soap operas at work may change peoples' interpretation of them.

#### **Criticism of the two step flow model**

- There may be no dominant opinion leaders or consensus on the meaning of media messages.
- Ignore that meaning of media messages may be imposed by the powerful.

#### **b. The uses and gratification model:** - consumers use the media to satisfy specific needs or desires.

- For example, you may enjoy watching a show like *Generations* while simultaneously tweeting about it on Twitter with your friends.
- Many people use the Internet to seek out entertainment, to find information, to communicate with like-minded individuals, or to pursue self-expression.

- Each of these uses satisfies/ gratifies a particular need, and the needs determine the way in which media is used.
- By examining factors of different groups' media choices, researchers can determine the motivations behind media use (Papacharissi, 2009).
- This model is based on the idea that people use the media in a variety of ways. The uses made of the media may vary according to age, gender etc.
- According to Mcquail (1972) four possible uses of media are:-
  - i. Diversion or escape
  - ii. Personal relationships e.g. feeling part of a soap opera community
  - iii. Personal identity: - confirming or weakening the sense of who we are by using media messages.
  - iv. Surveillance: - finding out what is going on.
- The analysis of the relationship between media and violence exemplifies this. Researchers employed the uses and gratifications theory in this case to reveal circumstances surrounding violent media consumption, as individuals with aggressive tendencies were drawn to violent media (Papacharissi, 2009).

#### **Criticism of the uses and gratification model**

- The model fails to explain why people use media in different ways.
- It ignores the possibility that the media can create people's needs
- It focuses on individuals rather than social, cultural and structural factors.

#### **c. Symbolic Interactionism**

- States that the self is derived from and develops through human interaction.
- The way you act toward someone or something is based on the meaning you have for a person or thing.
- People use symbols with shared cultural meanings for effective communication.
- Symbols can be constructed from just about anything, including material goods, education, or even the way people talk. Consequentially, these symbols are instrumental in the development of the self.
- Media plays an important role in creating and propagating shared symbols.
- Media can construct symbols on its own.
- By using symbolic interactionist theory, researchers can look at the ways media affects a society's shared symbols and, in turn, the influence of those symbols on the individual (Jansson-Boyd, 2010).
- Media creates and uses cultural symbols to affect an individual's sense of self through advertising.
  - Advertisers work to give certain products a shared cultural meaning to make them desirable. For example, when you see someone driving a BMW, what do you think about that person? You may assume the person is successful or powerful because of the car he or she is driving. Ownership of luxury automobiles signifies membership in a certain socioeconomic class. Equally, technology company Apple has used advertising and public relations to attempt to become a symbol of innovation and nonconformity. Use of an Apple product, therefore, may have a symbolic meaning and may send a particular message about the product's owner.
- Media also propagate other noncommercial symbols. National and state flags, religious images, and celebrities gain shared symbolic meanings through their representation in the media.

#### **d. Cultural effects theory: - cultural context affect how an Audience responds to the media.**

- Social context is important when looking at media effects
- Different people interpret the media in different ways.
- The effect of the media is not the same everywhere; interpretation is culture specific.
- Culture in this case includes even subcultural groups for example football fans respond differently to a one team winning a match; this may depend on whether they support the team or not or whether the team is a national team or foreign.
- Media message effects build up over time
  - To create or reinforce cultural norms for example images of women in the media create stereotypical images and place expectations on girls and women.
  - The images of topless girls seem to justify objectification of women as sex objects

#### **e. Spiral of Silence: - Those who hold a minority opinion silence themselves to prevent social isolation,**

- It explains the role of mass media in the formation and maintenance of dominant opinions.

- As minority opinions are silenced, the illusion of consensus grows, and so does social pressure to adopt the dominant position.
  - Minority voices are thus reduced to a minimum and perceived popular opinion sides wholly with the majority opinion. For example, prior to and during World War II, many Germans opposed Adolf Hitler and his policies; however, they kept their opposition silent out of fear of isolation and stigma.
  - Media is one of the most important gauges of public opinion and often used to explain the interaction between media and public opinion.
  - According to the spiral of silence theory, if the media propagates a particular opinion, then that opinion will effectively silence opposing opinions through an illusion of consensus. This theory relates especially to public polling and its use in the media (Papacharissi).
- f. **Cultivation Analysis:** - **Heavy exposure to media causes individuals to develop false perception of reality**
- False perception is based on the most repetitive and consistent messages of a particular medium.
  - This theory most commonly applies to analyses of television because of that medium's uniquely pervasive, repetitive nature. Under this theory, someone who watches a great deal of television may form a picture of reality that does not correspond to actual life. Televised violent acts, whether those reported on news programs or portrayed on television dramas, for example, greatly outnumber violent acts that most people encounter in their daily lives.
  - An individual who watches a great deal of television may therefore come to view the world as more violent and dangerous than it actually is.

Just as a gate controls the flow of traffic, the media acts as a gatekeeper, allowing some messages to travel through and others not.

## The Media as Gatekeeper

Media outlets also serve a gatekeeping function, which means they affect or control the information that is transmitted to their audiences.

In terms of the gatekeeping function of limiting, media outlets decide whether or not to pass something along to the media channel so it can be relayed.

- Because most commercial media space is so limited and expensive, almost every message we receive is edited, which is inherently limiting. A limited message doesn't necessarily mean the message is bad or manipulated, as editing is a necessity.
- A range of forces including time constraints, advertiser pressure, censorship, or personal bias, among others, can influence editing choices. Limiting based on bias or self-interest isn't necessarily bad as long as those who relay the message don't claim to be objective.
- Many people choose to engage with media messages that have been limited to match their own personal views or preferences. This kind of limiting also allows us to have more control over the media messages we receive.

Gatekeepers also function to expand messages. For example, a blogger may take a story from a more traditional news source and do additional research, interview additional sources, and post it on his or her blog.

- Expanding helps get more information than we would otherwise so we can be better informed.
- On the other hand, a gatekeeper who expands a message by falsifying evidence or making up details either to appear more credible or to mislead others is being unethical.
- Last, gatekeepers function to reinterpret mass media messages. This is useful when gatekeepers translate a message from something too complex or foreign for us to understand into something meaningful.
- In the lead-up to the Supreme Court's June 2012 ruling on President Obama's health-care-overhaul bill, the media came under scrutiny for not doing a better job of informing the public about the core content and implications of the legislation that had been passed. Given that policy language is difficult for many to understand and that legislation contains many details that may not be important

to average people, a concise and lay reinterpretation of the content by the gatekeepers (the media outlets) would have helped the public better understand the bill. Of course, when media outlets reinterpret content to the point that it is untruthful or misleading, they are not ethically fulfilling the gatekeeping function of reinterpretation.

## **The Media as “Watchdog”**

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- This watchdog role is intended to keep governments from taking too much power from the people and overstepping their bounds.
- Central to this role is the notion that the press works independent of the government. The “freedom of the press” allows the media to act as the eyes and ears of the people.
- The media is supposed to report information to the public so they can make informed decisions.
- The media also engages in investigative reporting, which can uncover dangers or corruption that the media can then expose so that the public can demand change.