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# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

What is Sociology?

What Do Sociologists Study?

The Origins of Sociology

The Institutionalization of Sociology

Sociology Today

Have you ever wondered why individuals and societies are so varied? Do you ask what social forces have shaped different existences? The quest to understand society is urgent and important, for if we cannot understand the social world, we are more likely to be overwhelmed by it. We also need to understand social processes if we want to influence them. Sociology can help us to understand ourselves better, since it examines how the social world influences the way we think, feel, and act. It can also help with decision-making, both our own and that of larger organizations. Sociologists can gather systematic information from which to make a decision, provide insights into what is going on in a situation, and present alternatives.



## SEMESTER – I

### DSC1A: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

- ◉ **Objective:**
- ◉ To make the students to understand the basic concepts of sociology.
- ◉ To provide the knowledge to understand the importance of certain social processes such as socialization, social control and social change, in human social life.
- ◉ To mould the student as an ethical human being and good citizen.

# INTRODUCTION

- Meaning,
- Definition,
- Nature, and
- Scope

# INTRODUCTION

- ◉ sociology is a distinctive social science, but it is not an isolated social science, but every social science is depending more and more on inter-disciplinary approach, that is, historians and sociologists.
- ◉ **WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?**
- ◉ **What is Sociology?**
- ◉ **Sociology** is the scientific study of society, including patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and culture.
- ◉ The term *sociology* was first used by Frenchman Auguste Comte in the 1830s when he proposed a synthetic science uniting all knowledge about human activity. In the academic world, sociology is considered one of the social sciences.
- ◉ [1] *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, Article: Sociology. Edited by Craig Calhoun. 2002. New York : Oxford University Press.

# WHAT DO SOCIOLOGISTS STUDY?

- Sociologists study all things human, from the interactions between two people to the complex relationships between nations or multinational corporations. While sociology assumes that human actions are patterned, individuals still have room for choices. Becoming aware of the social processes that influence the way humans think, feel, and behave plus having the will to act can help individuals to shape the social forces they face.

# MEANING

- **Meaning of Sociology:**
- The term sociology is collected of two words; Latin word 'Socius' means companion or associate and Greek word 'Logos' means study. Thus etymological meaning of sociology is, "The science of society". However, almost all sociologists differ in their views regarding the exact definition of the term. They generally define sociology as study of:
  - Social action- *Max Weber*
  - Interactions- *Gillin and Gillin*
  - Social relationships- *Maclver and Page, A.W. Green*
  - Social groups- *M. Johnson*
  - Social institutions- *Durkheim*
  - Society- *Giddings, ward*

# DEFINITIONS OF SOCIOLOGY

- ◉ **Auguste Comte:** Comte defines Sociology as the science of social phenomena “subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation”.
- ◉ **Kingsley Davis:** “Sociology is a general science of society”.
- ◉ **Morris Ginsberg:** “In the broadest sense, Sociology is the study of human interactions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences”.
- ◉ **Anthony Giddens:** “Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies”.
- ◉ Thus, in general, Sociology is concerned with man, his social relations and his society.



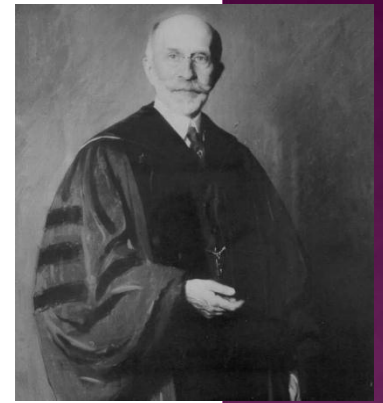
# THE ORIGINS OF SOCIOLOGY

- ◉ Sociologists believe that our social surroundings influence thought and action. For example, the rise of the social sciences developed in response to social changes. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans were exploring the world and voyagers returned from Asia, the Americas, Africa, and the South Seas with amazing stories of other societies and civilizations. Widely different social practices challenged the view that European life reflected the natural order of God.
- ◉ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western Europe was rocked by technical, economic, and social changes that forever changed the social order. Science and technology were developing rapidly. James Watt invented the steam engine in 1769, and in 1865 Joseph Lister discovered that an antiseptic barrier could be placed between a wound and germs in the atmosphere to inhibit infection. These and other scientific developments spurred social changes and offered hope that scientific methods might help explain the social as well as the natural world. This trend was part of a more general growth in rationalism.

# CONTI..

- ◉ The industrial revolution began in Britain in the late eighteenth century. By the late nineteenth century, the old order was collapsing “under the twin blows of industrialism and revolutionary democracy” (Nisbet, 1966: 21). Mechanical industry was growing, and thousands of people were migrating to cities to work in the new factories. People once rooted in the land and social communities where they farmed found themselves crowded into cities. The traditional authority of the church, the village, and the family were being undermined by impersonal factory and city life.
- ◉ Capitalism also grew in Western Europe in the nineteenth century. This meant that relatively few people owned the means of production—such as factories—while many others had to sell their labor to those owners. At the same time, relatively impersonal financial markets began to expand. The modern epoch was also marked by the development of administrative state power, which involved increasing concentrations of information and armed power (Giddens, 1987: 27).
- ◉ Finally, there was enormous population growth worldwide in this period, due to longer life expectancy and major decreases in child death rates. These massive social changes lent new urgency to the development of the social sciences, as early sociological thinkers struggled with the vast implications of economic, social and political revolutions. All the major figures in the early years of sociology thought about the “great transformation” from simple, preliterate societies to massive, complex, industrial societies.

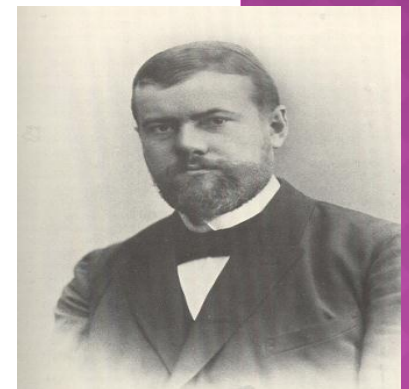
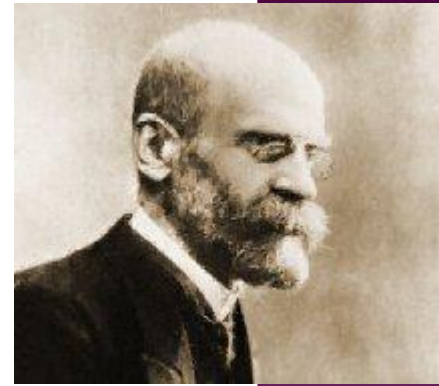
# THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIOLOGY



- Sociology was taught by that name for the first time at the University of Kansas in 1890 by Frank Blackmar, under the course title Elements of Sociology, where it remains the oldest continuing sociology course in the United States. The first academic department of sociology was established in 1892 at the University of Chicago by Albion W. Small, who in 1895 founded the American Journal of Sociology.

# CONTI...

- ◉ The first European department of sociology was founded in 1895 at the University of Bordeaux by Émile Durkheim, founder of *L'Année Sociologique* (1896). The first sociology department to be established in the United Kingdom was at the London School of Economics and Political Science (home of the *British Journal of Sociology*) in 1904.
- ◉ In 1919 a sociology department was established in Germany at the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich by Max Weber, and in 1920 by Florian Znaniecki.



# CONTI...

- ◉ International cooperation in sociology began in 1893 when René Worms founded the *Institut International de Sociologie*, which was later eclipsed by the much larger International Sociological Association (ISA), founded in 1949. In 1905, the American Sociological Association, the world's largest association of professional sociologists, was founded, and in 1909 the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie* (German Society for Sociology) was founded by Ferdinand Tönnies and Max Weber, among others.
- ◉ **Sociology Today**
- ◉ Sociology is now taught and studied in all continents of the world. Examples from 48 countries in the world have been collected at McMaster University.
- ◉ <https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/introsociology/Documents/Field%20of%20sociology033108.htm#whatis sociology>

# NATURE OF SOCIOLOGY

- ◉ In nature of sociology we investigate, what type of subject Sociology is? Is sociology a science, or an art or what? To answer this question Robert Bierstedt enlisted the following characteristics of sociology in his book “*The Social Order*”:
- ◉ **Sociology is an independent science.** Sociology like any other discipline have its own area of study and not fully dependent on other discipline.
- ◉ **Sociology is a social science :** Social sciences focus on various aspect of human society while physical sciences deal with natural phenomena. Thus Sociology is a social science as it deals with man and his social activities.

# CONTI...

- ◉ **Sociology is a categorical discipline:**  
Sociology is value-free. It is only interested in 'what is' and not 'what should be' or 'ought to be'.
- ◉ **Sociology is pure science :** As a Pure science it is only interested in acquisition of knowledge, it has nothing to do with application of that knowledge. Like Physics is a pure science while engineering is its application.
- ◉ **Sociology is relatively an abstract science :** It studies the society in an abstract (Theoretical not physical) way. Like, Sociology is not interested in particular families but in family as a social institution that exists in all societies.



# CONTI...

- ◉ **Sociology is a generalising science** : Sociology is not interested in particular events rather it studies events in a general way. Example: History study French Revolution but Sociology will be interested in revolutions in general.
- ◉ **Sociology is a general science**: Like Economy or Political Science, Sociology does not focus on only one aspect of human activity. As it has to deal with society it includes all aspects of human life in a general way.
- ◉ **Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science**. It studies the social phenomena in scientific way. It is based on reason (logic), observation and experimentation



# CONCLUSION:

- Sociology Is Social , Categorical Pure. Abstract , independent Generalising Science and General Science in Both Rational and empirical Discipline but Not Physical Science, Normative Discipline, Special Social Science Applied Science Concrete Science Particularising Science. Thus we can say that sociology is a science of general nature and falls in the category of social sciences

# REFERENCES

- ◉ <http://www.digitalglober.com/meaning-nature-scope-of-sociology/>
- ◉ <http://www.digitalglober.com/origin-and-development-of-sociology/>

**THANK YOU**

