Types of Sociological Theory
SOC 302

University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development

General Editor: Prof. Bayo Okunade

Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.

Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka
Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing education for "Liberty and Development" for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.
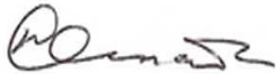
The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic

information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre's provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.
We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

Professor Bayo Okunade
Director

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Study Session 1   Understanding Sociological Theory

Introduction

Sociological theory simply refers to a complex theoretical and methodological framework that facilitates organizing knowledge that is used to analyze the social world. It is recognized that sociological theory is constantly evolving – it involves analysis at a macro-level, which focuses on social structures shaping the society; and analysis at a micro-level which is usually a more detailed study on social interaction taking place in specific situations.

This Study Session will focus on Understanding Sociological Theory. You will learn the Meaning of Sociological Theory, Accounts of the Importance of Sociological Theory, and Contributions of Early Sociologists to Sociological Theory. Also Basic Assumption in Sociological Theory will also be treated.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

1.1 Explain the Origin and Meaning of Sociological Theory (SAQ 1.1)

1.2 Discuss Sociologists to Sociological Theory (SAQ 1.2)

1.3 Discuss the Basic Assumption in Sociological Theory (1.3)

1.1   Origin and Meaning of Sociological Theory

To a large extent, the central theories and research interests of Sociology represent both social and intellectual conditions that led to the emergence of the discipline of Sociology in nineteenth-century Europe.
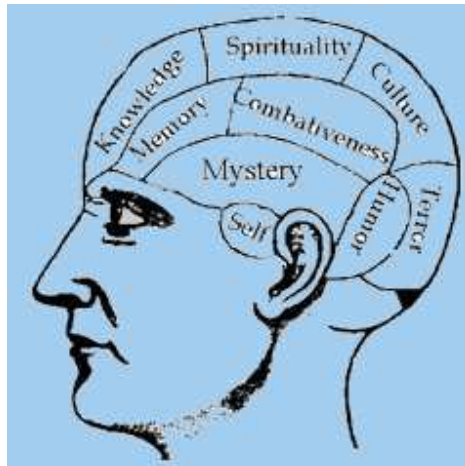
Figure 1.1: Sociology Chain

Source: Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan

The tremendous political and economic changes that swept Europe at the time brought about disturbing impacts to the sustainability and legitimacy of all social institutions in the European society. Thus, what became needful was a complex set of theoretical and methodological framework that would translate these disturbing impacts into new perspectives where they could be analyzed in a systematic fashion as found in the natural sciences.

Box 1.1. Emerging of Sociology
"Sociology as a discipline emerged with such perspectives, and this consequently is the main contribution made by the founding fathers of the discipline, such as Comte, Spencer, Marx, Weber, Simmel and Durkheim".

Figure 1.2: Sociology Body

Source: www.indiana.edu/~soc/img/Sociology_word_cloud_1.jpg

Auguste Comte, one of the founding fathers of the discipline who gave Sociology its name and much of its vision for society, emphasized the contribution that Sociology could make to the development of a new social order. He holds that the purpose of Sociology is the uncovering of laws of social order and social progress.

He demonstrated that with sociological theories (perspectives), Sociology would avoid the fragmentation of social reality perpetrated by other disciplines; thus, resolving the social crisis caused by the conflict between rival principles of explanation.

Like Comte, Herbert Spencer set out by bringing together the various elements of social order and process into a general model. He made imaginative use of the organic analogy in analyzing the nature of social interrelationships; and he also employed the theory of evolution in explaining the course of social development.

For Karl Marx, he also treated themes of social interrelationships and development; however, he went further to prescribe some definite causal relationships between social structures. The mode of production of material-life is seen as a determinant of social, political and even spiritual processes of life.

On his part, Max Weber did not provide a model of whole social systems; instead, he provided models (ideal types) of parts of such systems. His concept of bureaucratic rationalization for instance, showed trends which characterized the modern world.

Figure 1.3: Auguste Comte, one of the Founding Fathers Sociology

Source: www.1bp.blogspot.com/Auguste-Comte-1850.jpg

Georg Simmel's Sociology is closely related to that of Weber, as he attempts to relate forms of social interaction to larger social structures. He showed the difference of the social interaction in small-scale communities with that which occur in cities and towns.

Almost all the early sociologists were interested in defining the distinctive character of social phenomena. More so, Emile Durkheim emphasized on the constraints which society exercises on the individual, and the pathological consequences which result when such constraints are removed. He analyzed the social causes of suicide and rejects explanations which viewed it as a purely individual phenomenon.

- ■ Sociology as a discipline emerged with such perspectives, according to the study; the founding fathers of the discipline are?

- ☐ Comte, Spencer, Marx, Weber, Simmel and Durkheim

1.2 Sociological Theory and Social Theory

New subcategories had been suggested for the field of sociological theory, as it is often argued that the field is very broad. Kenneth Allan had proposed the terms sociological theory and social theory. Social theory, according to him, focuses on commentary and critique of modern society rather than explanation of what is happening in modern society.
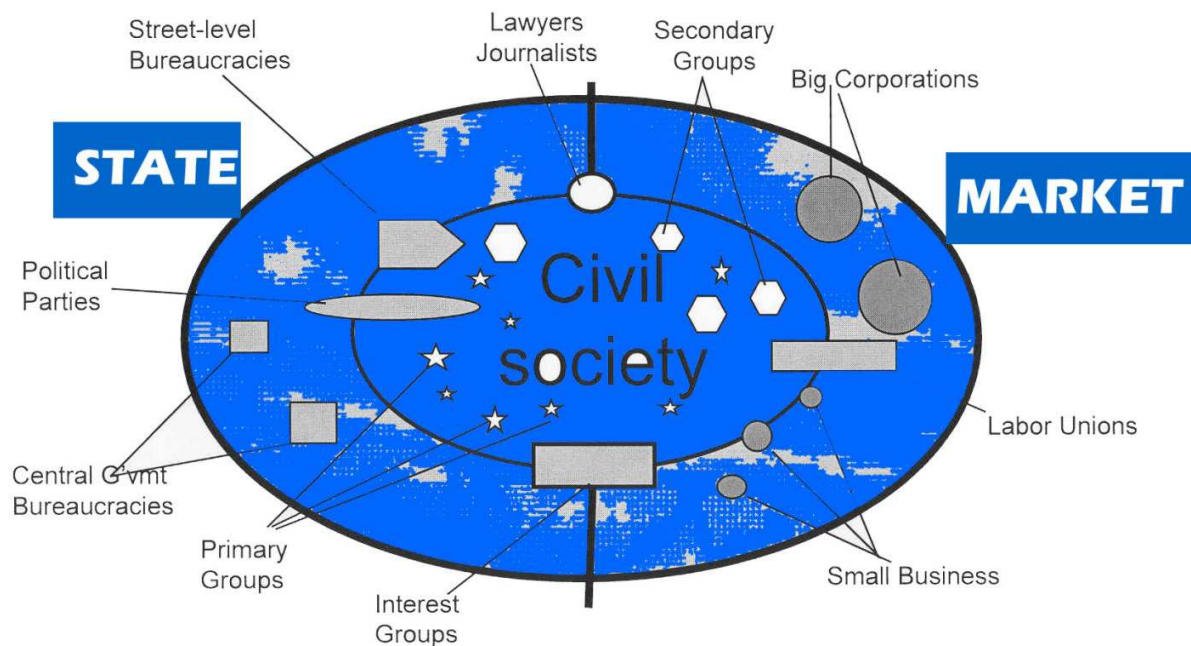
Figure 1.4: The Tripartite Society

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

In contrast, sociological theory is focused on an attempt to create abstract and testable propositions about society. It primarily relies on the scientific method, which aims for objectivity, and attempts to avoid passing value judgments.

Social theory is often more subjective, and is much more likely to use the language of values and judgment: referring to the concepts of 'good' or 'bad'. Prominent sociological theorists include: Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Randall Collins, James Samuel Coleman, Peter Blau, Immanuel Wallerstein, George Homans, Jonathan H. Turner, and so on. Interestingly, there are prominent scholars who could be described as being in between social and sociological theories, these include: Harold Garfinkel, Herbert Blumer, and Claude Levi-Strauss.

■ Prominent sociological theorists include_____?

☐ Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Randall Collins, James Samuel Coleman, Peter Blau, Immanuel Wallerstein, George Homans, Jonathan H. Turner, and so on

1.3   Basic Assumption in Sociological Theory

A theory broadly speaking refers to a statement as to how and why particular facts are related. C. Wright Mill's theory of the sociological imagination for instance, demonstrates how personal issues could become public issues. When theories are created or constructed by sociologists, importantly, two basic questions usually arise.

Box 1.3. Two Basic Questions When Theories Are Created

"The **first question** has to do with what the sociologists wants to study (for instance crime, poverty, unemployment, and so on); and the **second question** has to do with how the facts of this study will be."

Sociological theory therefore helps in allowing interrelated ideas to flow together in ways that lead to a systematic understanding of the social world. This understanding of the social world would therefore form the basis for making predictions about the future of the social world. Although not all of the theories in reality fully support this rendition.

The basic assumptions of sociological analysis reside in the Sociology's most fundamental concepts 'society' and 'culture'. The basic assumption of sociological theory therefore is the fact that humans are shaped and influenced by their groups and group heritage.

Accordingly, even if culture and society are human being's creations, it is believed that both culture and society have their own lives and histories. Thus, both culture and society are seen, in sociological analysis, as having a life apart from the people who create, embody and enact them. The concepts of culture and society are tacitly predicted on the assumption that humans have created a social world from which they have been alienated.

■ The basic assumptions of sociological analysis reside in the Sociology's most fundamental concepts 'society' and 'culture'. **True** or **False**?

☐ Your answer should be "True"

Summary of Study Session 1

In Study Session 1, you have learnt that:

1. Sociological theory had been defined in this study as a complex theoretical and methodological framework that facilitates organizing knowledge that is used to analyze and explain the social world.

2. It was also conceived as involving analysis at a macro-level, which focuses on social structures shaping the society; and analysis at a micro-level which is usually a more detailed study on social interaction taking place in specific situations.

3. The emergence of sociological theory was also discussed with emphasis on the fact that to a large extent, the central theories and research interests of Sociology represent both social and intellectual conditions that led to the emergence of sociological theory in nineteenth-century Europe.

4. The tremendous political and economic changes that swept Europe at the time brought about disturbing impacts to the sustainability and legitimacy of all social institutions in the European society.

5. What became needful was a complex set of theoretical and methodological framework that would translate these disturbing impacts into new perspectives where they could be analyzed and explained in a systematic fashion as found in the natural sciences.

6. The basic assumption of sociological analysis was highlighted as residing in the discipline's most fundamental concepts 'society' and 'culture'.

7. The basic assumption of sociological theory was revealed as the fact that humans are shaped and influenced by their groups and group heritage.

8. Both culture and society are seen, in sociological analysis, as having a life apart from the people who create, embody and enact them.

9. Accordingly, social theory is said to focus on commentary and critique of modern society rather than explanation of modern society.

10. Whilst sociological theory is focused on an attempt to create abstract and testable propositions about society.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 1.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.1)
Georg Simmel's Sociology shows that _____?

SAQ 1.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.2)
According to Kenneth Allan, sociological theory and social theory focuses on what?

SAQ 1.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.3)
When theories are created or constructed by sociologists, importantly, two basic questions usually arise, state them

SAQ 1.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.4)
Explain Mixed Economic System and give examples of the countries that practice it

Study Session 2   Central Problem of Sociological Theory

Introduction

It is possible to make some general observations about the problem areas of interaction in any society. The central problem of sociological theory involves a situation of action and interaction. Kingsley Davis for instance in his work, *Human Society,* showed that the problem of the integration of systems of social action that forms the crux of sociological theorizing is best explained at two levels.

First, the role of technical and economic norms in bringing system and order into the unit acts performed by a particular individual, and secondly the problems involved in the relationship of the unit acts or chains of unit acts of more than one individual. However, it is the latter analysis which concerns us in this lecture and which is particularly important to the elaboration of a formal picture of any social system

This Study Session will focus on Central Problem of Sociological Theory. You will learn the Problem of Economic Order, and the Problem of Legitimacy.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

2.1 Explain the Problem of Economic Order (SAQ 2.1)

2.2 Discuss the Problem of Legitimacy (SAQ 2.2)

2.1 The Problem of Economic Order

The first problem which sociological theory attempts explanation is the problem of economic order between individuals. This arises from the fact that the supply of opportunities and resources which represent means in the action plans of separate individuals is inherently limited. Hence, there is necessarily a social problem of allocation of these scarce opportunities and resources to alternative uses and to different individuals.

In other words some sort of property system is expected to evolve in any working social system. Nonetheless, this does not, in any way, settle questions about the necessity of any particular type of property system and it should not be thought that it contributes anything to the great debate about the inevitability of private property which has played a great part in the history of sociological research and theory.

A basic assumption which underlies analysis here is the assumption that every individual will not automatically accept the property system which exists. The reality is that once there is a dominant pattern of motivation in the social system that pattern of motivation implies that there will be some attempt to provide systematically for the allocation of scarce goods between alternative uses.

When participants in the social system do not accept the property system as morally binding on them, Kingsley Davies argued that they may clearly resort to fraud or force. Davis sees this possibility not merely as one which may occur in some cases but as a normal feature of all social systems. Hence, he goes on to argue that the property system must be backed by political institutions, that is, institutions which have the task of allocating, not only facilities for social action, but the right to use power to compel other individuals to act in expected ways.

- ■ The first problem which sociological theory attempts explanation is _____?
- ☐ The problem of economic order between individuals

2.2 The Problem of Legitimacy

This presupposes the notion of the *right* to use power, which connotes the conception of rights or 'legitimacy', and this, of course, is another problem area of social systems to which Davis draws attention. According to him, in a stable social system, some set of ultimate values is necessary, in terms of which certain actions and the use of power in support of these actions can be shown to be legitimate.

Individuals in society who always support that basic patterns of action should be encouraged would always ensure that a set of ultimate values to legitimate the use of power in support of certain actions and a certain system of allocation of resources is enthroned.

At this point, Davis identified an important problem. This is that the ultimate values are not necessarily accepted for their own sake. They are too far removed from the point of giving real satisfaction and rewards. Instead of being accepted for their own sake, these ultimate values are often bound in with the beliefs of individuals about non-empirical entities and the sorts of actions which are required in relation to these entities.

In other words, behaviour in conformity with the needs of the interaction system is accepted not because it is perceived to be in conformity with the system but because it happens to be in consonance with the behaviour which is ordered by religious beliefs and the ritual rules of the society. Hence, the non-rational unit acts which ordinarily ought to have influence at the very base of a sociological model are shown to have a function at its apex.

It can be seen that Davis' position on this matter is very uncertain. It can be easily accepted that any interaction system would have problems regarding economic allocation, power, and the development of an ultimate value system. It is assumed that members of society would easily accept the existing interaction system that exists before. However, it is less obvious that religious belief and ritual are assumed as the ultimate value system.

Although it has been acknowledged that some means have potentials of inculcating ultimate value attitudes in members of society, but there is no necessary reason why this means should be religious belief and ritual; as religious belief and ritual might have a quite independent role within the system.

The role of religion in social systems is recognized as one of the most perplexing problems in sociological theory. Davis, Emile Durkheim, sees religion as being the means whereby ultimate values are established and reinforced. As in the case of Durkheim, it is worthy to know whether the means that religion is explained is in terms of the ultimate values of the social system reinforcing and explaining religion or it is in terms of religion establishing and explaining the social system.

The work of Parsons and Davis is believed to take the latter view, though it is not explicit. But there is the alternative view expounded by Marx for instance, when he observed that '*the secret of the Holy Family must be found in the earthly family*'. This no doubt creates a very practical

problem in sociological analysis. It is the problem of how to treat the non-rational unit acts at the base of a sociological model.

The question may now arise, is it the task of the sociologist to seek to explain these non-rational unit acts by showing their relation to unit acts of a rational kind through the mediation of the institutions of control or are they to be accepted as separate elements in the social system? This is still in fact regarded as an unresolved problem of sociological theory.

In sociological analysis, it is inappropriate to say that the non-rational *must* be reduced to the rational, as there are still non-rational acts which defy explanation in the rational sense. It is, of course, the duty of the sociologist to show such relationships and dependencies as can be shown. However, the sociologist must be aware that this cannot be declared in advance that it will be possible to do so in all cases. To some extent, it is believed that some non-rational actions are irreducible to rational actions.

- The role of religion in social systems is recognized as what?
- As one of the most perplexing problems in sociological theory

Summary of Study Session 2

In Study Session 2, you have learnt that:

1. It was highlighted that Kingsley Davis for instance in his work, *Human Society,* showed that the problem of the integration of systems of social action that forms the crux of sociological theorizing is best explained at two levels.

2. First, the role of technical and economic norms in bringing system and order into the unit acts performed by a particular individual, and secondly the problems involved in the relationship of the unit acts or chains of unit acts of more than one individual.

3. Individuals in society would always support certain actions and system of allocation of resources in society

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study

Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 2.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.1)

What was Kingsley Davies position when participants in the social system do not accept the property system as morally binding on them?

SAQ 2.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.2)

When Marx observed that '*the secret of the Holy Family must be found in the earthly family*'.

This no doubt creates a very practical problem in sociological analysis. It is the problem of what?

Study Session 3   Types of Sociological Theory

Introduction

As stated earlier, sociological theories or perspectives are complex theoretical and methodological frameworks, used to analyze and explain objects of social reality. These also help in facilitating and organizing sociological knowledge.

A unique character of sociological theory is that it is constantly evolving; therefore it can never be presumed to be complete. Sociological theory is usually involved with analysis at a macro-level, which focuses on social structures shaping the society or at a micro-level which is a close-up study on social interaction that take place in specific situations.

This Study Session will focus on Central Problem of Sociological Theory. You will learn the Problem of Economic Order, and the Problem of Legitimacy.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

3.1 Describe Classical/traditional Sociological Theories (SAQ 3.1)

3.2 Discuss the Contemporary/Modern Sociological Theories (SAQ 3.2)

3.1   Classical/Traditional Sociological Theories

Sociological theories are broadly classified into: *classical or traditional theories* (for instance: the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber**)** and *contemporary or modern theories.* Another classification of sociological theory is based on grand theories and theories of everyday life.
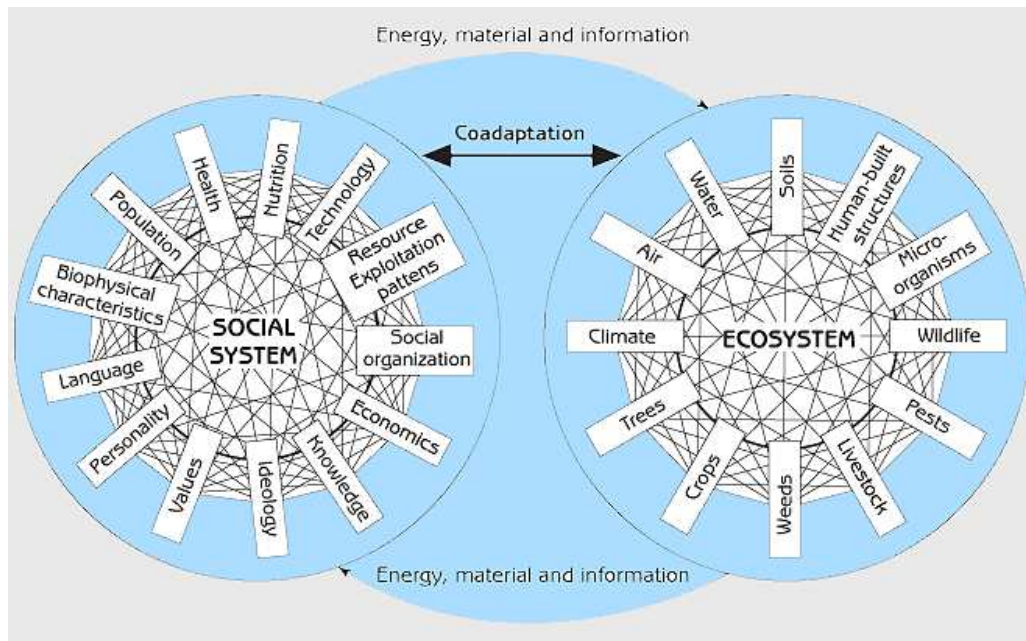
Figure 3.1: Social System and Ecosystem

Source: Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan

Grand theories attempt to analyze society as a whole – that is to explain the structure of the social-system and the processes of change that produce what becomes human history. Theories of everyday life on the other hand, mostly focus on mundane human behaviour in attempt to explain individual action and interaction between individuals, as well as beliefs, attitudes, and values within the context of groups and the broader social system.
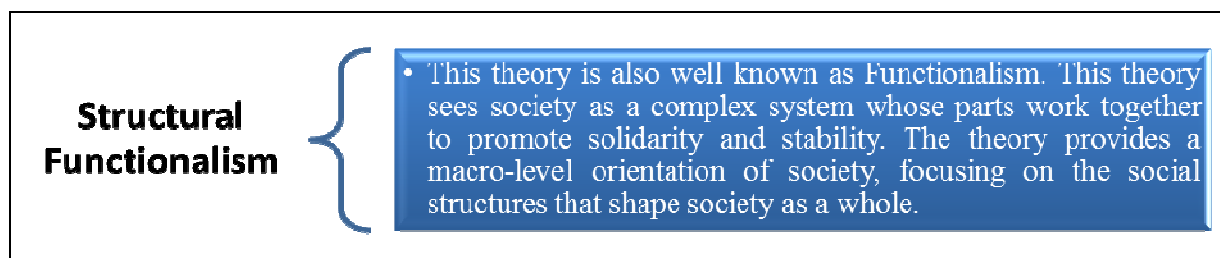
Figure 3.2: Structural Functionalism Theory

Source: Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan

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This theoretical approach is concerned with both social structure and social functions. Functionalism analyzes society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent part of society.

Some prominent sociologists associated with this approach include Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton. Herbert Spencer for example, demonstrated that the different parts that represent or make up society are best known as 'organs' that work toward the proper functioning of the entire 'body' as a whole.

This is an analogy of how the different organs of the human body work to ensure the functioning and survival of the entire body. A dominant criticism of this theoretical approach is that it does not give regards to the inequalities that exist within society, which give rise to tension and conflict in society.

Also, the theory had been blamed for being politically conservative. Hence, the social conflict theory has emerged to correct the inadequacies of structural functionalism.

- Some prominent sociologists demonstrated that the different parts that represent or make up society are best known as 'organs' what does it do?
- ☐ Organs work toward the proper functioning of the entire 'body' as a whole.
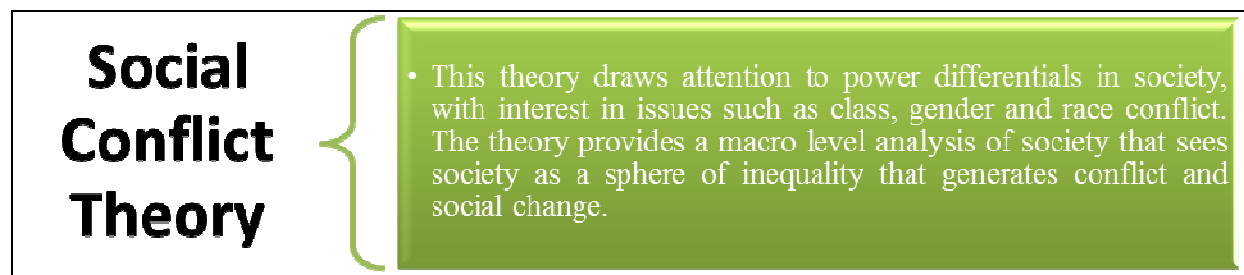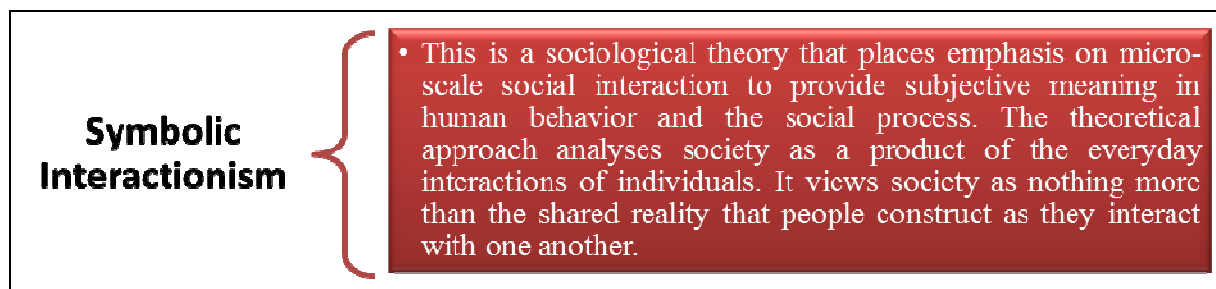

Figure 3.3: Social Conflict Theory

Source: Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan

The theory views social conflict as the struggle between segments of society over valued resources. This conflict is usually between the capitalists, these are people who own and operate factories and other businesses in pursuit of profits and the proletarians. Proletarians are people who sell their labour for wages. Karl Marx is regarded as the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the four major paradigms of Sociology.

Other important sociologists associated with this theory include Harriet Martineau, Jane Addams and W.E.B. Du Bois. This sociological perspective is not concerned with the manner in which social structures help society to operate, but instead, the theory is more concerned how 'social patterns' can cause some people in society to be dominant, and others to be oppressed.

Critics of the social conflict theory argue that the theory undermines shared values among members of society and does not explain how members of society rely on each other in order to help unify the society.

Symbolic Interactionism

- This is a sociological theory that places emphasis on micro-scale social interaction to provide subjective meaning in human behavior and the social process. The theoretical approach analyses society as a product of the everyday interactions of individuals. It views society as nothing more than the shared reality that people construct as they interact with one another.

Figure 3.4: Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Source: Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan

This approach sees people interacting in countless settings using symbolic communications. Therefore, society is a complex, ever-changing mixture of subjective meanings. Critics of this theoretical approach argue that the theory is only concerned with what is happening in one particular social situation, and disregards the effects that culture, race or gender for instance, may have on the people in that situation. Some important sociologists associated with this theoretical approach include Max Weber, George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman, Peter Blau and George Homans.

- Critics of the social conflict theory argue that _____?
- The theory undermines shared values among members of society and does not explain how members of society rely on each other in order to help unify the society

3.2   Contemporary/Modern Sociological Theories

Feminism

• This theory focuses on how gender inequality shapes social life. This theoretical approach shows how sexuality both reflects patterns of social inequality and helps to perpetuate them. Feminism, from a social conflict perspective, focuses on gender inequality and links sexuality to the domination of women by men.
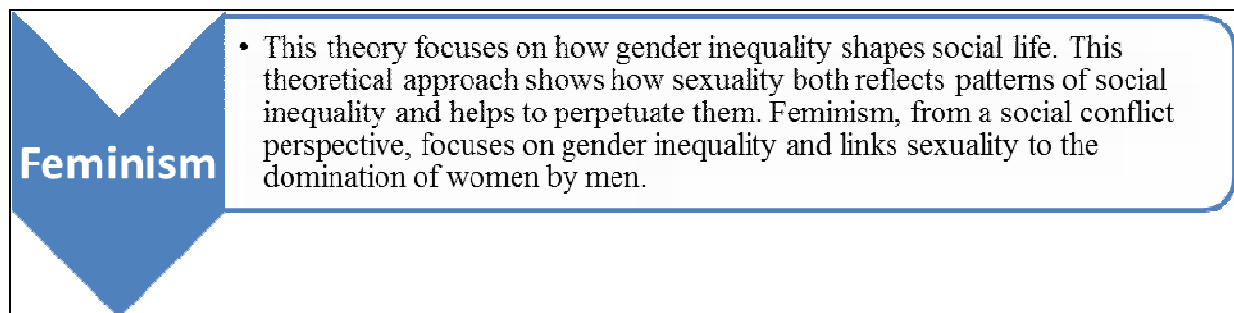
Figure 3.5: Feminism Theory

Source: Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan

Feminism broadly is described as a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. A feminist is considered as someone who is in support of social equality for men and women. Examples of feminists are Harriet Martineau and Jane Addams.

Table 3.1:   Basic Feminist Ideas

1	Striving to increase equity between men and female in the society.
2	The breaking of limits and bounds as regard choices that men and women can make in the society.
3	Elimination of gender stratification. That is the removal of unfairly limitations initially placed on peoples based on their gender.
4	Eradication of sexual violence against a particular sex.
5	Promotion of sexual freedom; as sexual groups are allowed more freedom.

Critics of this theoretical approach argue that feminism reduces social roles in society and has failed to recognize the fact that there are both physiological and physical differences between men and women think.

■ Striving to increase equity between men and female in the society is one if the Feminist Ideas "True" or "False"

☐ It is "True"
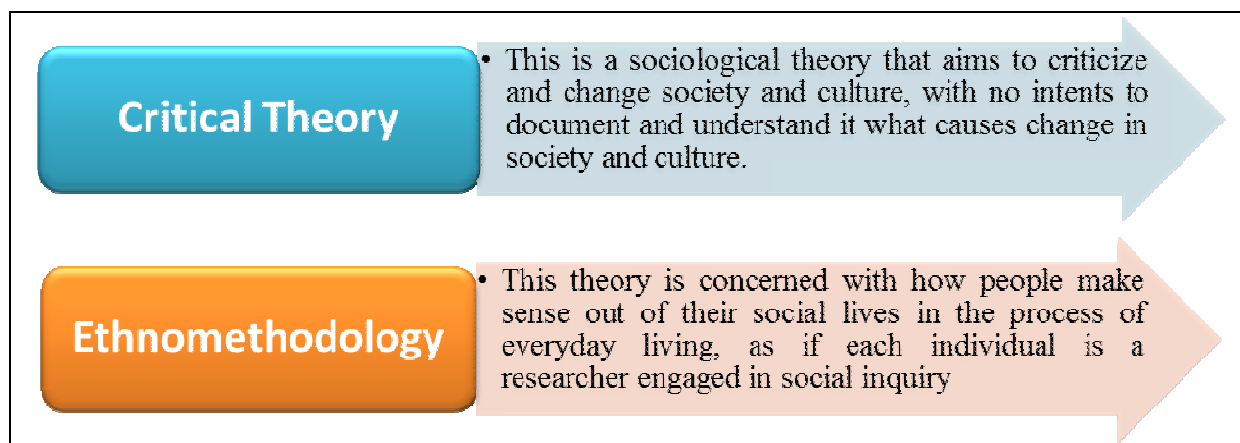
Figure 3.6: Critical Theory and Ethnomethodology

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

It is the study of how people attempt to make sense of their everyday surroundings. Harold Garfinkel (1967) is regarded as the proponent of this approach.

This theory begins by pointing out that everyday human behaviour rests on a number of assumptions. These assumptions are usually predictable due to the reaction of people or their behaviour in everyday reality.
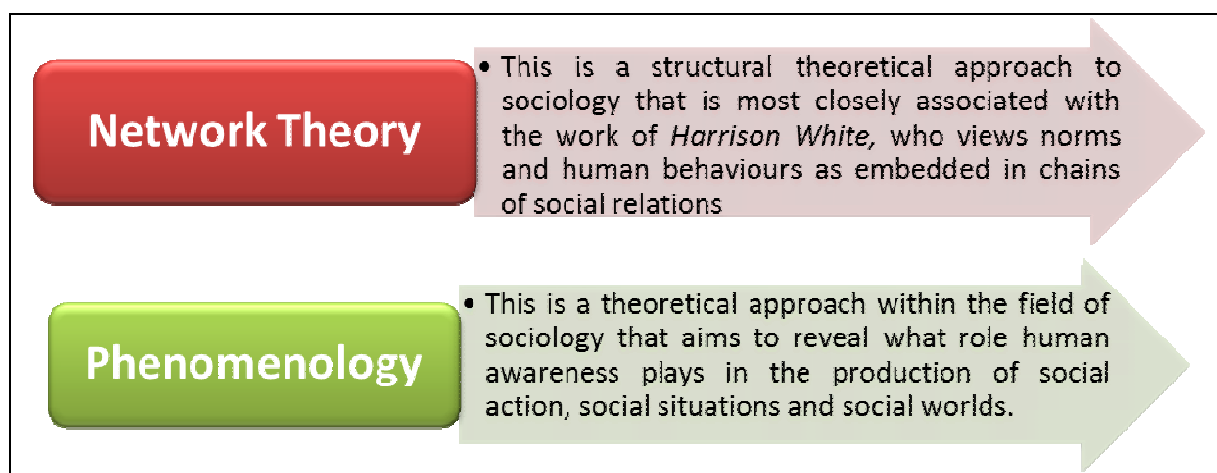
Figure 3.7: Network Theory and Phenomenology

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

In essence, phenomenology is the belief that society is a human construction. The social phenomenology of *Alfred Schutz* influenced the development of the social constructionism and ethnomethodology. It was originally developed by *Edmund Husserl.*
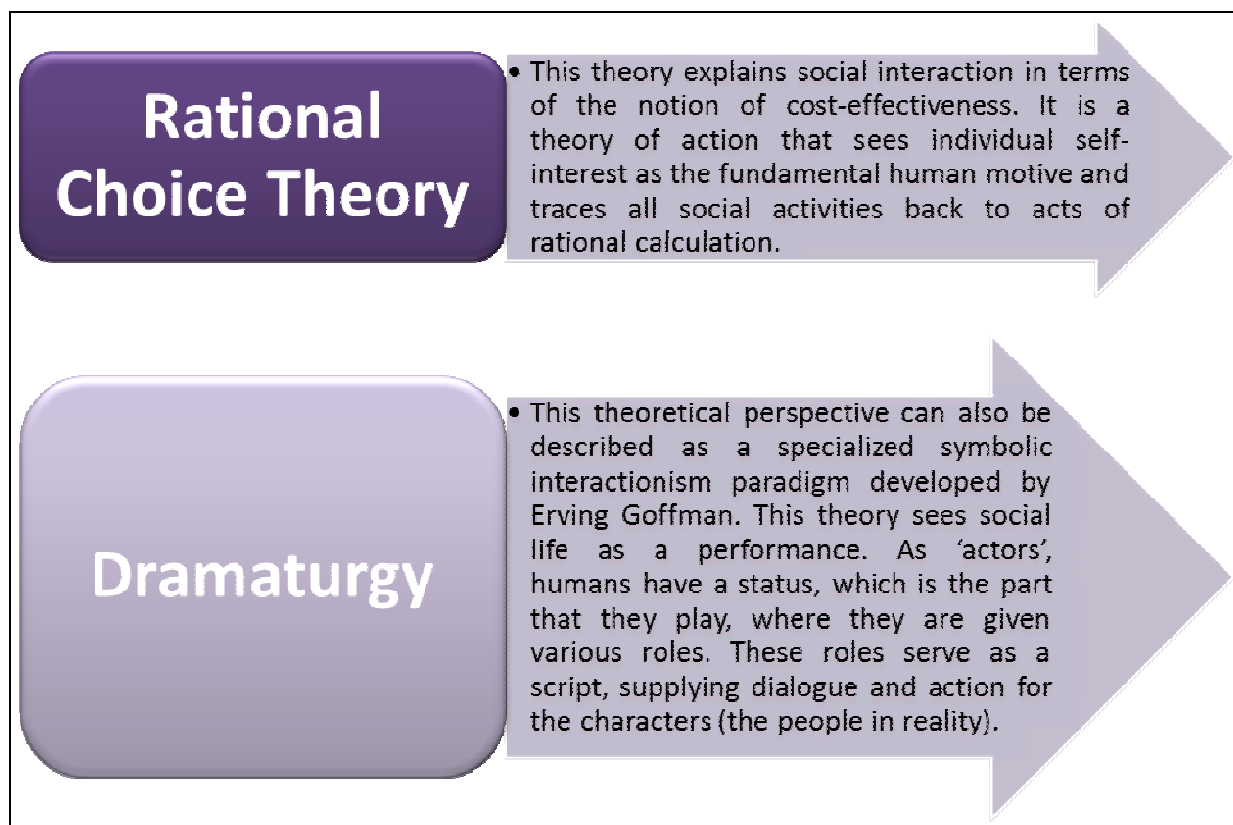
Figure 3.8: Rational Choice Theory and Dramaturgy

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

They also involve props and certain settings. For instance, a teacher (the role), uses materials like a blackboard (the prop), all the while using technical terms (the script), while in the classroom (the setting). In addition, our performance is the 'presentation of self', which is how people perceive us, based on the ways in which we portray ourselves. This process, also known as impression management, begins with the idea of personal performance.

- ◼ _____ is the theory that is concerned with how people make sense out of their social lives in the process of everyday living
- ☐ Ethnomethodology
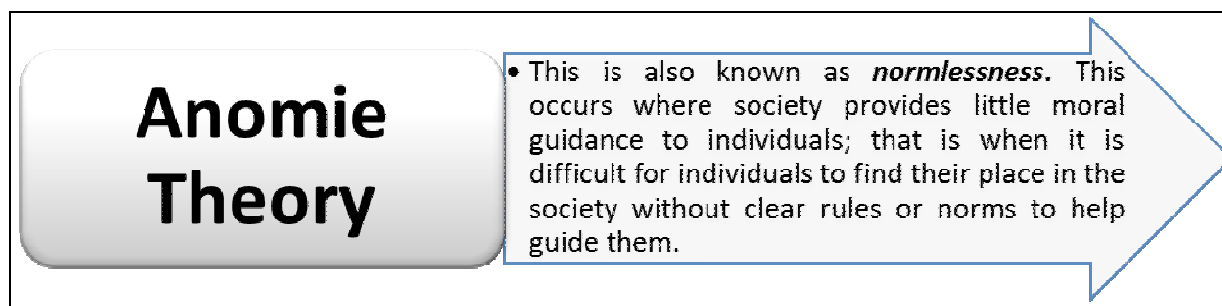
Figure 3.9: Anomie Theory

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

According to Robert Merton, anomie (normative breakdown) is largely derived from a disjunction between 'culturally prescribed aspirations' of a society and 'socially structured avenues for realizing those aspirations'.

In other words, a gap between people's aspirations and their access to legitimate means of achieving them results in a breakdown of values, at both societal and individual levels. In applying anomie theory, Emile Durkheim described anomie in his work, *The Division of Labour in Society.* He described anomie as one of the outcomes of an inequitable division of labour within the society.

According to him, such inequality causes a breakdown or lack of rules in society and results in class conflict. In another of his works, *Suicide*, Durkheim viewed anomie as an outcome of rapid social and economic change and hypothesized that it explained a particular kind of suicide that occurs when individuals experience marked and sudden changes in their social condition.
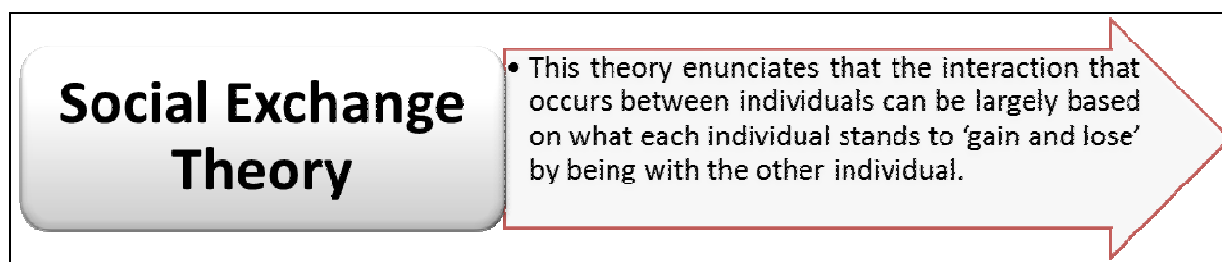
Figure 3.10: Social Exchange Theory

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

For instance, when an individual thinks about he or she may marry, such a person would surely look to see if the other person will offer just as much (or perhaps more) than what he or she would offer. This also includes judging the person's looks and appearance, or the person's social status.

21
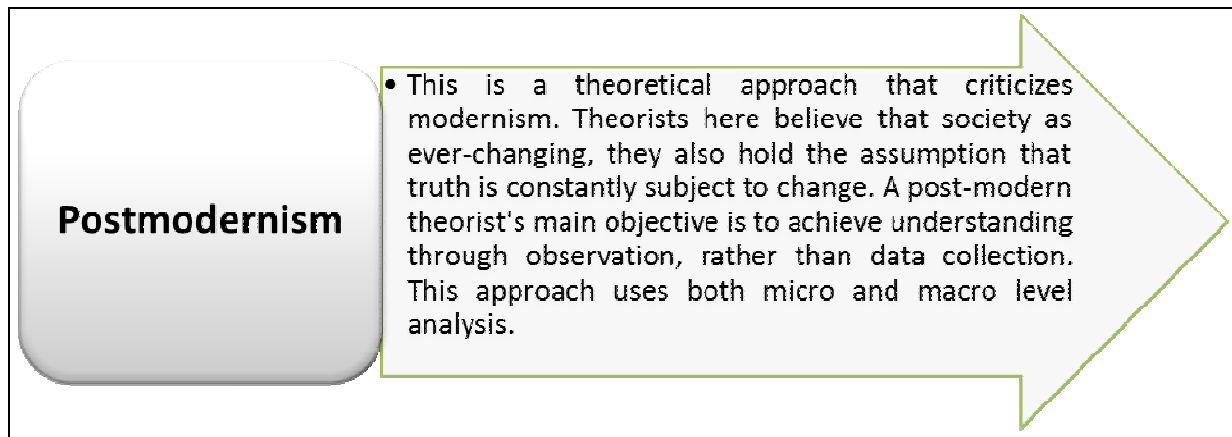
Figure 3.11: Postmodernism

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

A basic question that guide post-modernist inquiry lies on how one can understand societies or interpersonal relations, while rejecting the theories and methods of the social sciences, and also assumptions about the human nature. An example of a famous post-modernist is Michael Foucault; he was a French philosopher and one of the most influential post-modernist of all time.

■ When an individual thinks about he or she may marry, such a person would surely look for what in the other person?

☐ Such a person would surely look to see if the other person will offer just as much (or perhaps more) than what he or she would offer

Summary of Study Session 3

In Study Session 3, you have learnt that:

1. This study had examined types of sociological theories under the broad category of classical and contemporary theories.
2. These theories were briefly discussed as core assumption regarding the ontological nature of the social world.
3. In the classical category, structural functionism, social conflict theory and symbolic interactionism were discussed.

4. Whilst in the contemporary category, feminism, critical theory, ethnomethodology, network theory, phenomenology, rational choice theory, dramaturgy, anomie theory, social exchange theory and postmodernism were discussed.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 3.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 3.1)

Explain the following;

- Symbolic Interactionism Theory
- Structural Functionalism Theory

SAQ 3.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 3.2)

Feminism is the theory that focuses on how gender inequality shapes social life. Further explain according to the study

Study Session 4 Social Thought and Social Theory

Introduction

Broadly speaking, it is social thought that provides general theories to explain actions and behaviour of society as a whole; and this encompassed sociological, political, and philosophical ideas. Social theory on the other hand is employed to make distinctions and generalizations among different types of societies, and to analyze modernity as it has emerged in the past few centuries. Classical social theory has generally been presented from a perspective of Western philosophy, and often regarded as Eurocentric.

This Study Session will focus on Social Thought and Social Theory. You will learn basic philosophical questions addressed by social thinkers would be discussed. These include questions on human reason makes sense of the social world and shape it for the better. Questions on how the development of modern societies, with vast inequalities in wealth among citizens, constitutes progress.

Also, questions on how particular government interventions and regulations impact natural social processes

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

4.1 Explain the Concept of Society (SAQ 4.1)

4.2 Discuss the Enlightenment Period and Social Theory (SAQ 4.2)

4.3 Discuss the Enlightenment Period and Social Theory (SAQ 4.3)

4.1   Concept of Society

To most ancient Greek philosophers, including Aristotle and Plato, there is no distinction between politics and society. Accordingly, the concept of society did not emerge until much later part of the Enlightenment period.

Box 4.1: The Term "*Societe*"

The term *societe* is said to be first used by Rousseau in his discussion of social relations.

In his part, Ibn Khaldun, an influential Muslim scholar, in his work *Introduction to History,* published in 1377, described two types of societies:

Table 4.1: The Two Types of Societies

1	The city or town-dweller
2	The mobile, nomadic societies

- ■ The term *societe* is said to be first used by_____?
- ☐ By Rousseau in his discussion of social relations

4.2   The Enlightenment Period and Social Theory

The enlightenment is generally described as a period when modernity sprung up, with the emergence of the world economy and exchange among diverse societies, bringing sweeping changes and new challenges for society. During this period most philosophers embraced the idea of progress and ideas of modernity.

Figure 4.1: Intellectual History and Modernity
Source: www.ched.uq.edu.au/images/replett.jpg

Many philosophers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, and Denis Diderot, developed new social ideas during the Enlightenment. These ideas were considered unique because they were based on reason and methods of scientific inquiry. These ideas were different from prevailing ideas as they did not draw on ideas of the past that 'blindly' followed religious dogmas and authority of the monarch.

With the development of this kind of ideas, the status quo was challenged as scientists were required to find new normativity. This process allowed for the emergence of scientific knowledge which subsequently led to progress in society. French social thought during this period for instance focused on moral critique and criticisms of the monarchy.

- ◼ Many philosophers, developed new social ideas during the Enlightenment; these ideas were considered unique because?
- ☐ They were based on reason and methods of scientific inquiry

4.3   Classical Thinkers and Social Thought

One of the classical thinkers to be considered in this lecture is Adam Smith. He was primarily concerned with the question of whether vast inequalities of wealth represented progress. He

explained that the wealthy often demand ease, employing numerous others to carry out labour to meet their demands.

Figure 4.1: Adam Smith

Source: www.inveritascrescentes.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/adamsmith.jpg

He argued that this allows wealth to be redistributed among inhabitants, and for all to share in the progress of society. Smith explained that social forces can regulate the market economy with social objectivity and without need for government intervention. Smith regarded the division of labour as an important factor for economic progress.

Another classical thinker of consideration here is John Millar, Millar suggested that improved status of women was important for progress of society. He also advocated for abolition of slavery, suggesting that personal liberty will certainly motivate people to be more industrious, ambitious, and productive.

- ■ John Millar, suggested that improved status of women was important for progress of society. True or False
- ☐ True

Voltaire presented new scientific and philosophical ideas developed by Isaac Newton, John Locke, and others, introducing them to the French society. With this, methods used to study scientific phenomena were extended to study social and moral issues. The social and

philosophical questions addressed by social thinkers often centred on modernity. These questions among others include:

Box 4.2: Some of the Social and Philosophical Questions Addressed by Social Thinkers

- How human reason make sense of the social world and shape it for the better
- How the development of modern societies, with vast inequalities in wealth among the citizens constitute progress.
- How government interventions and regulations impact natural social processes whether the economy and market be regulated or not.

Other issues relating to modernity that were addressed by social thinkers during the Enlightenment period include alienation, social disorganization, secularization, loneliness.

European scholars such as Adam Ferguson, Montesquieu, and John Millar, among others, were regarded as the first scholars to study society as being distinct from political institutions and processes. In the nineteenth century, the scientific method was introduced into the study of society. This was a significant advancement which led to the development of Sociology as a discipline.

During the Enlightenment period, European societies were still largely rural, with minimal involvement of the government in the everyday life of the citizens. With the emergence of industrialization and urbanization, European societies were significantly transformed, and new ways of thinking about society also emerged. At this time, questions involving social order gained importance and relevance.

British social thinkers such as: Herbert Spencer, addressed questions and ideas relating to political economy and social evolution. Important German philosophers and social thinkers include scholars such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Georg Simmel. While important Italian social scientists include people like Antonio Gramsci, Gaetano Mosca, and Vilferdo Pareto.

- ■ "Whether the economy and market be regulated or not" This is one of what?
- ☐ One of the Social and Philosophical Questions Addressed by Social Thinkers

Summary of Study Session 4

In Study Session 4, you have learnt that:

1. This lecture had examined the relationship between social thought during the Enlightenment period and the development of social theory.

2. The Enlightenment period was described as a period when modernity sprung up, with the emergence of the world economy and exchange among diverse societies, bringing sweeping changes and new challenges for society.

3. It was demonstrated in the lecture that this period also led to the development of new social ideas. These ideas were considered unique because they were based on reason and methods of scientific inquiry.

4. The lecture discussed the role of prominent classical thinkers like Adam Smith in explaining questions of vast inequalities of wealth in society.

5. Another classical thinker that was discussed in the lecture is John Millar, Millar who suggested that improved status of women was important for progress in society.

6. The lecture ended by discussing the social and philosophical questions of interest to the social thinkers of the Enlightenment period.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 4.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.1)
The two types of Societies are?

SAQ 4.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.2)
Enlightenment is generally described as a period when _____?

SAQ 4.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.3)

"During the Enlightenment period, European societies were still largely rural" complete the sentence according to the study

Study Session 5: The Rise of Sociological Theory

Introduction

A significant character of sociological theory is the fact that as society continues to change, this also necessitates new methods of understanding and explaining these changes. Sociological theory is believed to be constantly evolving and therefore can never be presumed to be complete. In broad terms, the field of Sociology and sociological theory in particular is considered to be relatively new.

Sociology as a discipline has separated itself from the other social sciences due to its focus on society, a concept that goes beyond nation, as it includes communities, organizations and relationships.

This Study Session will focus on The Rise of Sociological Theory. You will learn Rise of Sociological Theory, the Industrialization in Rise of Sociological Theory, and Growth of Cities in Rise of Sociological Theory

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

5.1 Describe the Rise of Sociological Theory (SAQ 5.1)

5.2 Discuss Industrialization in Rise of Sociological Theory (SAQ 5.2)

5.3 Discuss Growth of Cities in Rise of Sociological Theory (SAQ 5.3)

5.4 Discuss Political Change in Rise of Sociological Theory (SAQ 5.4)

5.1   Rise of Sociological Theory

In broad perspectives, the following factors had been seen as being influential in the rise of sociological theory. These include: the rise of individualism, the emergence of the modern state, industrialization and capitalism, colonization, globalization and the world wars.

More specifically, Sociology as a discipline was born as a result of three striking changes in Europe. These include;

Box 5.1. Sociology was born as a result of three striking changes in Europe.

- The rise of factory-based industrial economy,
- The explosive growth of cities, and
- The spread of new ideas about democracy and political rights

5.2   Industrialization in Rise of Sociological Theory

In Europe during the Middle Ages, most people either worked on farms close to where they lived or they worked in small-scaled manufacturing industries. However, by the end of eighteenth century, this trend changed due to the invention of powerful machines which were being used in factories and mills.

Figure 5.1: Mills and Textile Machine
Source: www.millmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/100_6720.jpg

This invention of machine led to what is known as 'industrial revolution'. Consequently, most people in rural areas began to move to cities in order to become part of the anonymous crowd of the city's labour force. This migration to cities from rural areas eventually broke the ties of those who moved with traditional way of life which focused on community life and values.

Resultantly, this shift to industrialization and capitalism led to the expansion of cities and development of labour movements. Early sociologists were thus intrigued by the vast differences in social interactions that exist in the cities and the rural areas. This propelled them to seek for new ideas and theories to explain the kind of social interaction that have emerged and its associated challenges.

- Invention of machine led to what is known as_____?
- ☐ Industrial revolution

5.3   Growth of Cities

Due to the invention of industrial machinery, there were increasing demands for wool in textile mills. In order to meet up with the increasing demand for wool, landowners in rural areas now participated in the 'enclosure movement'. This is a practice where landowners incrementally fenced-off areas of their land to increase grazing lands for their sheep.

Figure 5.1: People Migrating to Ibadan for a Living

Source: www.gdb.voanews.com/A1FB2E40-3815-446C-9DA1-
F4E883935528_mw1024_n_s.jpg

This therefore left little choice for rural farm-workers; thus, most of them now moved to the cities to find work. These migrant workers faced crime and pollution in cities. The sudden increase in migration also led to overpopulation and homelessness. With these, migrant workers evolved a new social world with its own set of problems.

5.4   Political Change

During the Middle Ages, most Europeans viewed the power structure of society as an expression of the divine that is sacrosanct and unchangeable. The aristocrats occupied the top tier of society while slaves were at the bottom. However, in the eighteenth century, during the period of the Enlightenment, philosophers started to question the validity of this traditional view about the power structure in society.

Some of these philosophers include people like John Locke, Adam Smith and Thomas Hobbes. As a result, there was a shift in thinking from moral obligations to personal pursuit. This shift was also facilitated by industrialization and the emergence of wealthy people who had acquired wealth through capitalism and not just through inheritance. Consequently, as cities grew, people started to value individual rights and individual freedom in determining social status.

The French Revolution for instance was a great push in breaking the old political and social traditions. The French social analyst, Alexis de Tocqueville noted the change brought by the French Revolution as 'nothing short of regeneration of the whole human race' (1955;orig.1856). These revolutions certainly inspired a lot of political and religious change.

As an alternative to capitalism, people started to reach for socialism, a political and economic system where wealth is equally distributed among all workers. One of the most prominent philosophers against capitalism was Karl Marx who participated in political activities to protest the capitalist system.

■ In order to meet up with the increasing demand for wool_____ needs to be done

□ Landowners in rural areas should participate in the 'enclosure movement'

Summary of Study Session 5

In Study Session 5, you have learnt that:

1. A significant character of sociological theory is the fact that as society continues to change, this also necessitates new methods of understanding and explaining these changes

2. In broad perspectives, the following factors had been seen as being influential in the rise of sociological theory

3. This invention of machine led to what is known as 'industrial revolution'. Consequently, most people in rural areas began to move to cities in order to become part of the anonymous crowd of the city's labour force

4. Due to the invention of industrial machinery, there were increasing demands for wool in textile mills.

5. Some of these philosophers include people like John Locke, Adam Smith and Thomas Hobbes. As a result, there was a shift in thinking from moral obligations to personal pursuit

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 5.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.1)
Sociology was born as a result of three striking changes in Europe, list them.

SAQ 5.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.2)
Most people in rural areas began to move to cities. What could be the reason for this; according to the study?

SAQ 5.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.3)

The sudden increase in migration led to_____? List all that apply

SAQ 5.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.4)

In the eighteenth century, during the period of the Enlightenment, philosophers started to_____?

Study Session 6   Sociological Theory and the Law of Three Stages

Introduction

As early as 1822, Auguste Comte (1798-1857) set himself the task to 'discover through what fixed series of successive transformations the human race, starting from a state not superior to that of the great apes, gradually led to the point at which civilized Europe finds itself today'.

In putting to practice what Comte had conceived as a method of scientific comparison through time, he now projected his central conception, *The Law of Human Progress or The Law of Three Stages.*

This Study Session will focus on Sociological Theory and the Law of Three Stages. You will learn the Theological Stage, Metaphysical Stage and Positive Stage

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

6.1 Understand the Branch of Human Knowledge (SAQ 6.1)

6.2 Explain the Theological Stage (SAQ 6.2)

6.3 Discuss the Metaphysical Stage (SAQ 6.3)

6.4 Discuss the Positive Stage (SAQ 6.4)

6.1   Branch of Human Knowledge

Comte shown that each branch of human knowledge passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the Theological or ficticious; the Metaphysical or abstract; and the Scientific or positive.

Although Comte focused primarily on stages in the development and progressive emancipation of the human mind, he stressed that these stages correlated with parallel stages in the development of social organization, of types of social order, of types of social units, and of the material conditions of human life.

- Human knowledge passes successively through three different theoretical conditions, name them

□ The Theological or ficticious: the Metaphysical or abstract; and the Scientific or positive
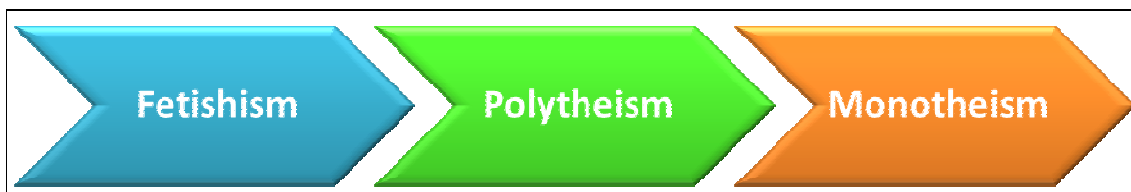
6.2   The Theological Stage

According to Comte, this stage of human progress refers to a stage where understanding of social reality is dependent on personified deities. During this stage, it is believed that all the phenomena of nature are the creation of the divine or supernatural.

Figure 6.1: Demonstration of Supernatural Power

Source: www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/55/Ring48.jpg

The natural cause of phenomena is not recognized here; consequently, causes of phenomena are attributed to supernatural or divine powers. Comte went further to break the theological stage into 3 sub-stages. These include:

Figure 6.2: The Three Theological Stages

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

Table 6.1: Theological Stages

1	**Fetishism**	This stage was regarded as the primary stage of the theological stage of thinking. In this stage, it is commonly believed that inanimate objects have living spirit; thus, people worship and venerate these objects like trees, rivers, mountains, stones, and so on.
2	**Polytheism**	This stage involves the explanation of social reality through the use of many gods. It is believed here that natural forces were controlled by different gods. For instance, there would be a god of thunder, god of iron, water, god of rain, god of fire, god of air, God of earth, and so on.
3	**Monotheism**	This refers to the belief in one God; all social phenomena are attributed to a single, supreme deity.

■ The three theological Stages in are?

☐ Fetishism, Polytheism, Monotheism

6.3   The Metaphysical Stage

The Metaphysical Stage indeed an extension of the theological stage. Here, there is impersonal abstract explanation to social reality. It is commonly believed in this stage that an abstract power or force guides and determines the events in the world.
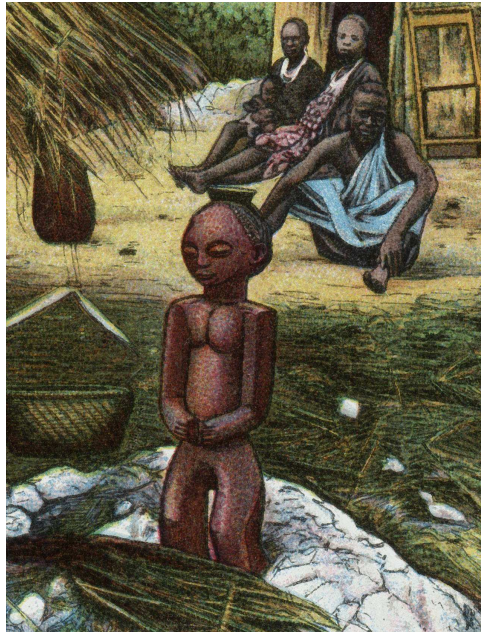
Figure 6.3: Demonstration of Metaphysical Power

Source:

www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cb/Fetish_Image_(relates_to_David_Livingstone)_by_The_London_Missionary_Society_cropped.jpg

It is worthy to note that metaphysical thinking discards belief in concrete God. The nature of inquiry here is usually legal and rational in nature.

- ■ The Metaphysical stage is indeed an extension of stage?
- ☐ The Theological Stage

6.4   The Positive Stage

This stage is also known as the scientific stage. It refers to a stage where social reality is based on scientific explanation in the form of observation, experimentation, and comparison. The positive stage relies hugely upon a distinct method, the scientific method, for its justification. During this stage, humans tried to establish cause and effect relationship of social reality.

Figure 6.4: The Scientific Power of Thought

Source: www.farm9.staticflickr.com/8144/7254347346_acaedb3960_b.jpg

Positivism is a purely intellectual way of looking at the world; as well it puts emphasis on observation and classification of data and facts. Comte, however, acknowledged that the three stages of thinking may co-exist in the same society or in the same mind at the same time and may not always be successive.

Comte proposed a hierarchy of the sciences based on historical sequence, with areas of knowledge passing through these stages in order of complexity. The simplest and most remote areas of knowledge, whether mechanical or physical, according to Comte become scientific first. These are followed by the more complex sciences, that is, those sciences considered closest to us.

The hierarchy of the sciences is developed by the following order according to Comte's law: Mathematics; Astronomy; Physics; Chemistry; Biology; Psychology; Sociology. Sociology, the science of society is hence considered as the '*Queen science*' in Comte's hierarchy as it would be the most fundamentally complex. Through social science, and especially through Sociology, Comte believed that all human social ills can be remedied.

■ Sociology, the science of society is considered as _____?

☐ The '*Queen science*'

Summary of Study Session 6

In Study Session 6, you have learnt that:

1. This lecture examined Comte's stages of human progress.
2. These stages were treated and broken into the following theological stage; these have 3 sub-stages, which are fetishism, polytheism and monotheism.
3. The second stage discussed was the metaphysical stage; and lastly, the positive stage.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 6

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 6.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.1)

Comte stressed that, these stages correlated with parallel stages in the development of social organization, kindly state the types.

SAQ 6.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.2)

According to the study, explain "Fetishism"

SAQ 6.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.3)

It is commonly believed in _____ stage, an abstract power or force guides and determines the events in the world. Fill the gap

SAQ 6.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.4)

According to Comte's law, the hierarchy of the sciences is developed by the following orders. What are the orders?

Study Session 7 Classical Sociological Theorists

Introduction

It is worthy to discuss briefly further about Auguste Comte's scientific writings, especially about his normative theory, which he sketched out in his earliest papers and developed in his later work, that is, from his work on *Positive Philosophy*

Let it be pointed out that Karl Marx's class theory rests on the premise that "*the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles*". Throughout his career, Emile Durkheim was believed to be primarily concerned with three goals the concept of rationalization had been used in Sociology to refer to the replacement of traditions, values, and emotions as motivators for behaviour in society

This Study Session will focus on Classical Sociological Theorists. You will learn the contributions of classical sociological theorists like Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber to sociological theory.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

7.1 Explain the Auguste Comte (1798-1857) - Normative Theory (SAQ 7.1)

7.2 Discuss the Karl Marx (1818-1883) - Class Theory (SAQ 7.2)

7.3 Discuss the Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) - Durkheimian Theory (SAQ 7.3)

7.4 Max Weber (1864-1920) - Rationalization (SAQ 7.4)

7.1 Auguste Comte (1798-1857) - Normative Theory

It is worthy to discuss briefly further about Auguste Comte's scientific writings, especially about his normative theory, which he sketched out in his earliest papers and developed in his later work, that is, from his work on *Positive Philosophy*. Comte in this work elaborated a complex blueprint of the good positive society of the future, a society directed by the spiritual power of priests of the new positive religion and leaders of banking and industry.

Figure 7.1: Auguste Comte

Source: www.1.bp.blogspot.com/-IQYxc5Cyl7o/UFb8TrjSECI/AAAAAAAASTw/SUWFhCFvBWw/s1600/Auguste-Comte-1850.jpg

These scientific-sociologist-priests according to Comte would be - as were their religious predecessors in the theological age - the moral guides and censors of the community, using the force of their superior knowledge to recall men to their duties and obligations. Comte envisioned these same people to be the directors of education and judges of the society.

In the positive-sociocracy of the future, the scientist-priests of the religion of humanity, having acquired positive knowledge of what is good and evil would sternly hold men to their collective duty and would help suppress any subversive ideas of inherent rights. Saint-Simon had suggested that in the future the domination of men over men would be replaced by the administration of things. Comte argued that the 'things' to be administered were in fact human individuals.

That human relation would become "thingified." Comte stated an instance during the eleventh century where a Pope, Pope Hildebrand, had for a brief moment extended his spiritual power over all temporal power, so the High Priest of Humanity, armed with a scientific knowledge; would as the Pope of humanity institute a reign of harmony, justice, rectitude, and equity. The new positivist order, according to Comte, would have *Love as its Principle, Order as its Basis, and Progress at its Aim.*

Comte argued that the egoistic propensities to which humans were prone to throughout their previous history would be replaced by altruism, that is, by the command, *Live for Others.* Individuals would be immersed by love for their fellows, and they would lovingly honour the positivist engineers of the soul who in their wisdom would incarnate the scientific knowledge of the past, present and the lawfully determined path into a predictable future.

Comte, especially in his later years, considered himself not only a social scientist but also, and primarily, a prophet and founder of a new religion that promised salvation for all the ailments of humanity. These normative aspects of Comte's thought are no doubt of great importance to sociological theory. Nonetheless, this aspect of his work must be understood within the social and intellectual context in which his work emerged.

- ■ Comte argued that the egoistic propensities to which humans were prone to throughout their previous history would be replaced by?

- ☐ Altruism, that is, by the command, *Live for Others*

7.2   Karl Marx (1818-1883) - Class Theory

First and foremost, let it be pointed out that Karl Marx's class theory rests on the premise that "*the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles*". According to this view, ever since human society emerged from its primitive and relatively undifferentiated state it has remained fundamentally divided between classes who clash in the pursuit of class interests.
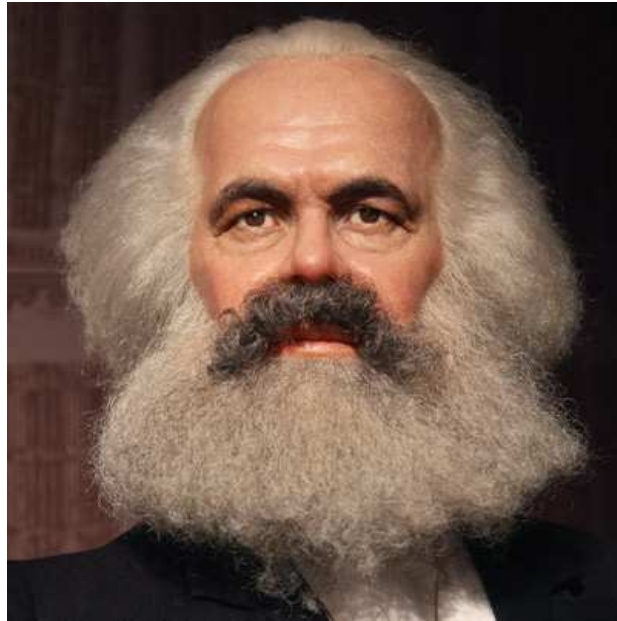
Figure 7.1: Auguste Comte

Source: www.biography.com/imported/images/Biography/Images/Profiles/M/Karl-Marx-9401219-1-402.jpg

In a capitalist world for instance, the factory which forms the hub of capitalism, is the main locus of antagonism between classes - between exploiters and exploited, between buyers and sellers of labour power - rather than of functional collaboration. To Marx, class interests and associated contradictions are indeed determinants of social and historical processes.

Marx's sociological analysis continually centres on how the relationships between men are shaped by their relative positions in regard to the means of production, that is, by their differential access to scarce resources and scarce power. Marx acknowledged that the unequal access to power and the means of production need not at all times and under all conditions lead to active class struggle.

But he likewise acknowledged that the potential for class conflict is inherent in every differentiated society, since such a society systematically generates conflicts of interest between persons and groups differentially located within the social structure, and, more particularly, in relation to the means of production.

■ Karl Marx's class theory rests on what premise?

□ The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles

Marx was concerned with the ways in which specific positions in the social structure tended to shape the social experiences of their incumbents and to predispose them to actions oriented to improve their collective fate.

Analytically, it is worthy to state here that class interests in Marxian Sociology are not given *ab initio*. Rather, they develop through the exposure of people occupying particular social positions to particular social circumstances. Thus, in early industrial enterprises, competition divides the personal interests of a crowd of people who are unknown to each other.

But the maintenance of their wages for instance would become a common interest which they have against their employer, and this will bring them together. The separate individuals would form a class only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors.

Class interests in this sense are fundamentally different from, and cannot be derived from the individual's interests. Class interests emerge as potential common interests of members of a particular social stratum derive from the location of that stratum within particular social structures and productive relations. In practical terms, potentiality is often transformed into actuality.

That is, Klasse en sich (class in itself) is transformed into Klasse fuer sich (class for itself); this occurs only when individuals occupying similar positions become involved in common struggles; a network of communication develops, and they thereby become conscious of their common fate. It is then that individuals become part of a cohesive class that consciously articulates their common interests.

Although an aggregate of people may occupy similar positions in the process of production and their lives may have objectively similar determinants, they become a class as a self-conscious and history- making body only if they become aware of the similarity of their interests through their conflicts with opposing classes.

To Marx, the basis upon which stratification systems rest is the relation of aggregates of men to the means of production. The major modern classes are: owners of labour-power; owners of

capital; and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and rent. Descriptively, classes are aggregates of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production.

Yet self-conscious classes, as distinct from aggregates of people sharing a common fate, need for their emergence a number of conditions among which are a network of communication, the concentration of masses of people, a common enemy, and some form of organization. Self-conscious classes arise only if and when there exists a convergence of what Max Weber later called 'ideal' and 'material' interests, that is, the combination of economic and political demands with moral and ideological quests.

The same mode of reasoning that led Marx to assert that the working class was bound to develop class consciousness once the appropriate conditions were present also led him to contend that the bourgeoisie, because of the inherent competitive relations between capitalist producers, was incapable of developing an overall consciousness of its collective interests.

To classical economists, the economic system of a market economy is pictured as one in which each individual is working in his or her own interest and solely concerned with the maximization of his or her own gains, nevertheless contributes to the interests and the harmony of the whole. Differing sharply from this position, Marx contended, as Raymond Aron noted that each individual, working in his or her own interest, contributes both to the necessary functioning and to the final destruction of the regime.

In contrast to the utilitarians who conceive of self-interest as a regulator of a harmonious society, Marx sees individual self-interest among capitalists as destructive of their class interest in general, and as leading to the ultimate self-destruction of capitalism. The very fact that each capitalist acts rationally in his own self-interest leads to ever deepening economic crises and hence to the destruction of the interests of all.

The conditions of work and the roles of workers dispose them to solidarity and to overcoming their initial competitiveness in favour of combined action for their collective class interests. Capitalists, however, being constrained by competition on the market, are in a structural position that does not allow them to arrive at a consistent assertion of common interests.

The market and the competitive mode of production that is characteristic of capitalism tend to separate individual producers. Marx granted that capitalists also found it possible to transcend

their immediate self-interests, but he thought this possible primarily in the political and ideological spheres rather than in the economic.

Capitalists, divided by the economic competition among themselves, evolved a justifying ideology and a political system of domination that served their collective interests. The State becomes therefore the structure through which individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests; thus, the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas.

Political power and ideology hence tend to serve the same functions for capitalists that class consciousness serves for the working class. To Marx, the economic sphere was always the finally decisive realm within which the bourgeoisie was always the victim of the competitiveness inherent in its mode of economic existence.

Marx shown that the economic sphere can evolve a consciousness, but he argued that it is always a '*false consciousness*', that is, a consciousness that does not transcend its being rooted in an economically competitive mode of production. Hence neither the bourgeoisie as a class, nor the bourgeois state, nor the bourgeois ideology can serve truly to transcend the self-interest enjoined by the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois reign is doomed when economic conditions are ripe and when a working class united by solidarity, aware of its common interests and energized by an appropriate system of ideas, confronts its disunited antagonists. Once workers became aware that they are alienated from the process of production, Marx believed that the dusk of the capitalist era has set in.

- ◼ According to Marx '*false consciousness*' means what?

- ☐ A consciousness that does not transcend its being rooted in an economically competitive mode of production

7.3   Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) - Durkheimian Theory

Throughout his career, Emile Durkheim was believed to be primarily concerned with three goals. First, to establish Sociology as a new academic discipline. Second, to analyze how societies could maintain their integrity and coherence in the modern era, when things such as shared religious and ethnic background could no longer be assumed. Lastly, Durkheim was concerned with the practical implications of scientific knowledge.

Most importantly, the importance of social integration is expressed throughout Durkheim's work. Let us consider one of Durkheim's quotes on social integration:

Box 7.1. Durkheim's Quote on Social Integration

For if society lacks the unity that derives from the fact that the relationships between its parts are exactly regulated, that unity resulting from the harmonious articulation of its various functions assured by effective discipline and if, in addition, society lacks the unity based upon the commitment of men's wills to a common objective, then it is no more than a pile of sand that the least jolt or the slightest puff will suffice to scatter.

- Emile Durkheim

To give Sociology a place in the academic world and to ensure that it is a legitimate science, Durkheim argued that Sociology must therefore have an object that is clear and distinct from philosophy or psychology, with its own methodology. Accordingly, the Durkheim theory hinges on the fundamental aim of discover structural social facts.

In his work, *Rules of the Sociological Method* (1895), Durkheim demonstrated how necessary it is to establish a method that would guarantee Sociology's truly scientific character. One of the key questions raised here concerns the issue of objectivity of the sociologist.

That is how could one study an object that, from the very beginning, conditions and relates to the observer? According to Durkheim, observations of sociological study must be as impartial and impersonal as possible, even though he also acknowledged that a 'perfectly objective observation' in this sense may never be attained.

A social fact must always be studied according to its relation with other social facts, never according to the individual who studies it. Sociology should therefore advocate comparison rather than the study of singular independent facts. To Durkheim, facts have no intellectual meaning unless they were grouped into types and laws.

- ■ To give Sociology a place in the academic world and to ensure that it is a legitimate science, Durkheim argued that?
- ☐ Sociology must therefore have an object that is clear and distinct from philosophy or psychology, with its own methodology

He affirmatively claimed that it is from a construction erected on the inner nature of the real that knowledge of concrete reality is obtained, knowledge not perceived by observation of the facts

from the outside. He thus constructed concepts such as the sacred and totemism exactly in the same way that Karl Marx developed the concept of class.

Unlike his contemporaries like Ferdinand Tonnies and Max Weber, Durkheim focused on the study of social facts, and not on what motivates the actions of individuals, an approach associated with methodological individualism. Durkheim defined a social fact in the following manner:

Box 7.2. Durkheim Social Fact Definition
A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations. **- Emile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method**

Durkheim's work and sociological theory revolved around the study of social facts, a term he coined to describe phenomena that have an independent existence in and of themselves, and are not bound to the actions of individuals, but have a coercive influence upon them. Durkheim argued that social facts have, *sui generis*, an independent existence greater and more objective than the actions of the individuals that compose society.

According to Durkheim, only such social facts can explain the observed social phenomena. Being exterior to the individual person, social facts may thus also exercise coercive power on the various people that make up society, as it can sometimes be observed in the case of formal laws and regulations, but also in situations implying the presence of informal rules, such as religious rituals or family norms.

According to Durkheim, social facts can be material (physical objects) or immaterial (meanings, sentiments, etc.). Immaterial social facts cannot be seen or touched, but they are external and coercive, and as such, they become real, gain 'facticity'. On the other hand, physical objects can represent both material and immaterial social facts; for example a flag is a physical social fact that often has various immaterial social facts (the meaning and importance of the flag) attached to it.

The task of sociological theory is therefore the provide explanations to what had been discovered a quantitative or experimental approach. Just like social institutions in general, Durkheim described society as a set of social facts. More than what society is, Durkheim was also

interested in answering questions on 'how is a society created' and 'what holds a society together'.

In attempting to answer the question of 'what holds society together', Durkheim shown in his work, *Division of Labour in Society,* that humans are inherently egoistic, but norms, beliefs and values (collective consciousness) form the moral basis of society, which also brings about social integration in society. Accordingly, collective consciousness is of key importance to the society, it is a requisite function without which the society cannot survive.

To Durkheim, collective consciousness produces the society and holds it together, and at the same time individuals produce collective consciousness through their interactions. Likewise, it is through collective consciousness that human beings become aware of one another as social beings, and not just animals.

Durkheim described collective consciousness in the following words, that 'the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common consciousness'.

Durkheim shown that the emotional part of the collective consciousness usually overrides our egoism; as humans are emotionally bound to culture, as they act socially since this is recognized as the responsible and moral way to act. A key to forming society according to Durkheim is social interaction, he believed that humans, when in a group, will inevitably act in such a way that a society is formed.

- According to Durkheim, only such social facts can explain what?
- ☐ The observed social phenomena

7.4   Max Weber (1864-1920) - Rationalization

The concept of rationalization had been used in Sociology to refer to the replacement of traditions, values, and emotions as motivators for behaviour in society. Traditions, values, and emotions here is said to be motivated by rational, calculated actions. The term is believed to be propounded by Max Weber.

Weber illustrated what rationalization implies in his work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* where he shown how the values of some Protestant denominations like the Calvinists have shifted towards rational means of economic gain as a way of dealing with their 'salvation anxiety'.

The rational consequences of this doctrine, he argued, soon grew to be incompatible with its religious roots, and so the salvation concerns of Calvinism were eventually discarded. Weber subsequently applied this concept in his later works, notably in his studies on bureaucracy and on the classifications of authority. In these works he showed how social organization and sociological theory are inevitably moving towards rationalization.

Weber believed that a move towards rational-legal was inevitable. In charismatic authority for instance, the death of a leader effectively ends the power of that authority. On the other hand, it is only through a rationalized and bureaucratic form that this authority be passed on.

In Weber's sociological analysis, what his work depicted was not only the secularization of Western *culture*, but also and especially the development of modern *societies* from the viewpoint of rationalization. The new structures of society were marked by the differentiation of the two functionally intermeshing systems that had taken shape around the organizational cores of the capitalist enterprise and the bureaucratic state apparatus.

Weber understood this process as the institutionalization of purposive-rational economic and administrative action. To the degree that everyday life was affected by this cultural and societal rationalization, traditional forms of life - which in the early modern period were differentiated primarily according to one's trade - were dissolved.

In another instance, in traditional societies governance is based on traditional leadership such as a queen or chief, on the contrary, in modern societies, governance operates by rational-legal systems. Weber further described the eventual impacts of rationalization in his work, *Economy and Society,* where he argued that increasing rationalization of human life would eventually trap individuals in an 'iron cage' or rule-based, rational control.

Again, one of Weber's greatest contributions to sociological theory is the notion of his *ideal type*. He described the ideal type as basically a theoretical model constructed by means of a detailed empirical study of a phenomenon. That an ideal type is an intellectual construct that a sociologist may use to study historical realities by means of their similarities and divergences from the model. He emphasized that ideal types are not utopias or images of what the world ought to look like.

Also, Weber's typology of the four types of social action is central to comprehending his Sociology. According to Weber, social action may be classified as: means-ends rational action,

value-rational action, affectual action, or traditional action. He went further to developed a multidimensional theory of stratification that incorporated 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 refers to 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.

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 analysis of stratification and   power.

Critics have argued that Weber had failed to offer any alternatives to rationalization, capitalism, and bureaucracy. They also deprecate Weber's resolute pessimism about the future of rationalization and bureaucracy.

Summary of Study Session 7

In Study Session 7, you have learnt that:

1. It is worthy to discuss briefly further about Auguste Comte's scientific writings, especially about his normative theory, which he sketched out in his earliest papers and developed in his later work, that is, from his work on *Positive Philosophy*

2. Karl Marx's class theory rests on the premise that "*the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles*".

3. Throughout his career, Emile Durkheim was believed to be primarily concerned with three goals

4. Accordingly, the Durkheim theory hinges on the fundamental aim of discover structural social facts

5. The concept of rationalization had been used in Sociology to refer to the replacement of traditions, values, and emotions as motivators for behaviour in society

6. In Weber's sociological analysis, what his work depicted was not only the secularization of Western *culture*, but also and especially the development of modern *societies* from the viewpoint of rationalization

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 7

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 7.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.1)

That human relation would become "**thingified**." Was stated by whom and in what instance?

SAQ 7.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.2)

Marx's sociological analysis continually centres on how the relationships between men are shaped; explain further according to the study

SAQ 7.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.2)

In attempting to answer the question of 'what holds society together', Durkheim shown in his work, *Division of Labour in Society,* that _____?

SAQ 7.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.4)

Weber believed that a move towards rational-legal was inevitable. In charismatic authority for instance, what is he trying to explain?

Study Session 8   Structure-Agency Integration

Introduction

It is widely contended that the problem of structure and agency has become fact the basic issue of interest in modern sociological theory. Dealing this the structure-agency linkage is in fact, the 'acid test' of a general social theory and the 'central problem' in sociological theory in particular. In this study, you will understand exemplar of sociological theories that attempt to integrate agency and structure. Agency here generally refers to micro-level, individual actors; however, it also refers to (macro) collectivities that act. In like manner, while structure usually refers to large-scale social structures, it also refers to micro structures such as those involved in human interaction.

This Study Session will focus on Structure-Agency Integration. You will learn the Structure-Agency Debate, Structure-Agency Integration, Recent Developments in Structure-Agency Integration, and Structure-Agency Integration other Contemporary Theorists.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

8.1 Explain the Structure-Agency Debate (SAQ 8.1)

8.2 Explain the Structure-Agency Integration (SAQ 8.2)

8.3 Discuss the Recent Developments in Structure-Agency Integration (SAQ 8.3)

8.4 Discuss Structure-Agency Integration other Contemporary Theorists (SAQ 8.4)

8.1 The Structure-Agency Debate

Generally in sociological theorizing, there is this standing debate over the primacy of structure or agency in shaping human behaviour. Agency is defined as the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices; whilst structure refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available to individuals in society.

MICRO	MACRO
Agency	Structure
Individual Choice "Free Will"	Social Force
Solidarity	Social Control

Figure 8.1: Structure and Agent Elements

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

The structure-agency debate is somehow similar with the 'nature- nurture' debate, which questions whether an individual's nature (physiology) or nurture (socialization) predominates in the formation of the individual's identity. In the same vein, the structure- agency debate may be viewed as an issue of socialization against autonomy in determining whether an individual acts as a free agent or in a manner dictated by social structure.

The debate over the primacy of structure or agency indeed lies at the heart of both classical and contemporary sociological theory. That is this debate is at the centre of the question of social ontology. These include questions such: 'What is the social world made of? What is a cause of the social world, and what is an effect? Do social structures determine an individual's behaviour or does human agency determine an individual's behaviour?

The central debate, therefore, is between theorists committed to the notions of methodological holism and those committed to methodological individualism. The first notion, methodological holism, is the idea that actors are socialized and embedded into social structures and institutions that constrain, or enable, and generally shape the individuals' dispositions towards, and capacities for, action, and that this social structure should be taken as primary and most significant.

The second notion, methodological individualism, is the idea that actors are the central theoretical and ontological elements in social systems, and social structure is a result and consequence of the actions and activities of interacting individuals.

To Functionalists such as Emile Durkheim, structure and hierarchy are essential elements in stabilizing the continued existence of society. On the contrary, theorists like Karl Marx emphasized that the social structure can act to the detriment of the majority of individuals in a society. In both these instances 'structure' here refers to something both material, in terms of being economic or cultural (for example, structure may refer to norms, traditions, ideologies and customs).

Some theorists argue that our social existence is largely determined by the overall structure of society. Sociological theories which aligned with this view include: structuralism, and some forms of Functionalism and Marxism, which in this context can be seen as forms of holism – a notion that depicts 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'.

On the contrary, other theorists stress the capacity of individual 'agents' to construct and reconstruct their worlds. Some sociological theories that aligned with this view include: interactionism, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology.

- ■ The central debate, is between theorists committed to the notions of _____?
- ☐ Methodological holism and those committed to methodological individualism
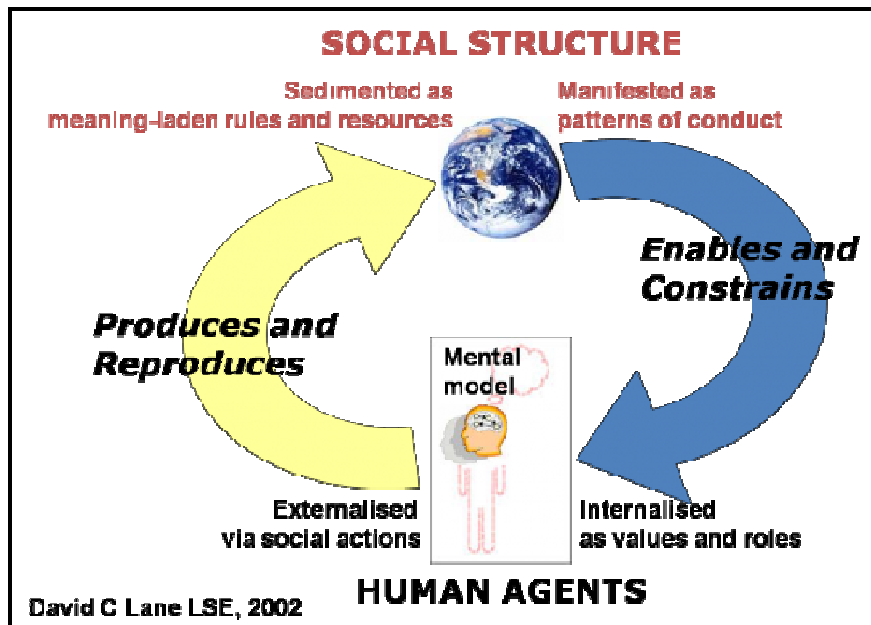
8.2 Structure-Agency Integration

Figure 8.2: Structure and Agent Integration

Source: www.systemswiki.org/images/thumb/6/63/StructureAgencyLane.png/600px-StructureAgencyLane.png

Most modern social theorists such as Bourdieu (1977, 1990), have advocated for a point of balance between structure and agency.

These theorists see structure and agency as complementary forces - structure influences human behaviour, and humans are capable of changing the social structures they inhabit. The theory of Structuration by Anthony Giddens is one prominent example of structure-agency integration.

- ■ "The theory of Structuration by Anthony Giddens is one prominent example of structure-agency integration". True or False?

- ☐ True

8.3   Recent Developments in Structure-Agency Integration

In this lecture, let us briefly examine recent developments that have advocated for structure-agency integration. The critical realist structure/agency perspective embodied in the Transformational Model of Social Action (TMSA) for instance has applied structure-agency integration conceptions in its analyses.

Social science scholars such as Tony Lawson in economics and Margaret Archer in Sociology have successfully demonstrated this integration in their works. Kenneth Wilkinson in his work, *Community in Rural America,* took an interactional/field theoretical perspective focusing on the role of community agency in contributing to the emergence of community.
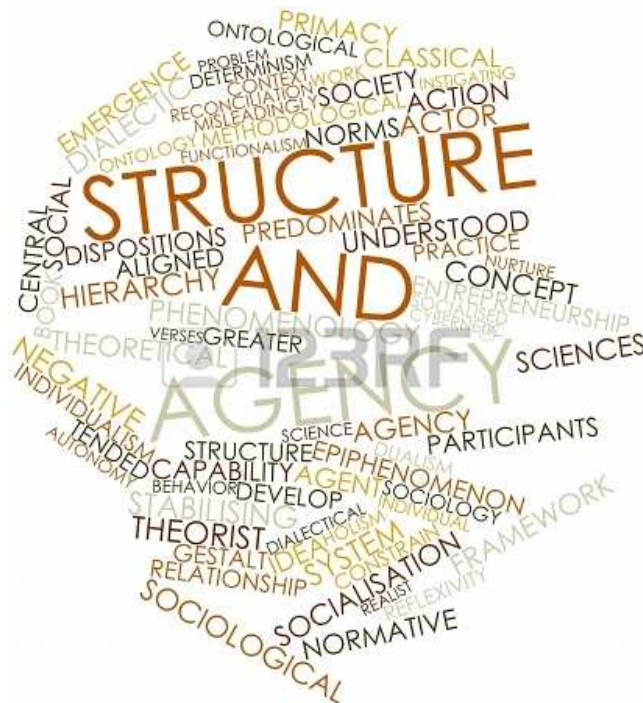
Figure 8.3: Structure and Agent with related Tags and Terms

Source:

www.us.123rf.com/450wm/radiantskies/radiantskies1211/radiantskies121103516/16579201-abstract-word-cloud-for-structure-and-agency-with-related-tags-and-terms.jpg

The Danish psychologist, Ole Dreier, had proposed in his work, *Psychotherapy in Everyday Life,* that individuals are best conceptualized as participants in social practices (social structures); and that these participants have the capability to either reproduce or change these social practices.

This indicates that neither the participants, nor the social practices can be fully understood when looked at in isolation. According to him, any attempt to look at participants and social practices in isolation is indeed invalid. Thus, it is recognized that the participants co-create social practice and social structure, and this only happens when the individual participates in a social practice.

Structure-agency integration has continued to evolve, with scholars such as Nicos Mouzelis in his work, *Sociological Theory: What Went Wrong?* and Margaret Archer's work, *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach,* continuing to push for the ongoing development of structure-agency theory and integration.

Work in information systems for instance by Mutch (2010) has emphasized Archer's Realist Social Theory. In entrepreneurship research for example, Archer's theory has been used to demonstrate the view that starting a new business organization needs to be understood in the context of social structure and agency.

- The Danish psychologist, Ole Dreier, had proposed in his work, *Psychotherapy in Everyday Life,* that?
- ☐ Individuals are best conceptualized as participants in social practices (social structures); and that these participants have the capability to either reproduce or change these social practices

8.4   Structure-Agency Integration other Contemporary Theorists

Pierre Bourdieu, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, Roberto Mangaberia Unger, Anthony Giddens are the other contemporary theorists that have advocated structure-agency integration

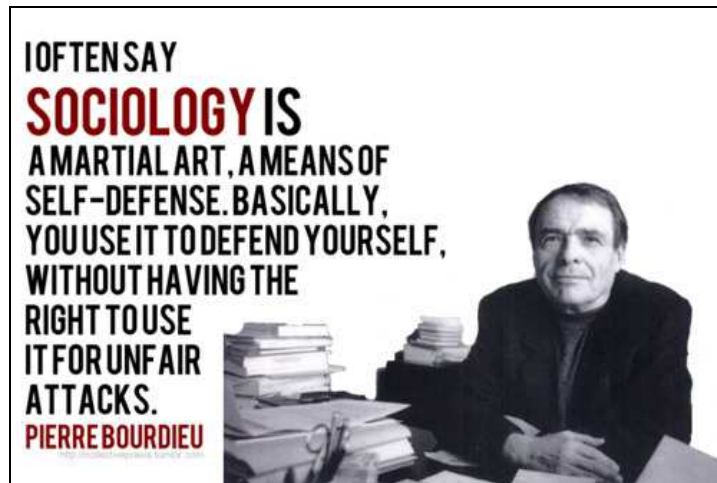### 8.4.1 Pierre Bourdieu (August 1, 1930 – January 23, 2002)

Figure 8.4: Pierre Bourdieu

Source: www.31.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lu8vu11x3h1r64ybyo1_500.jpg

Bourdieu was a French theorist who presented his *theory of practice* on the dichotomise understanding of the relation between structure and agency in his works. Some of his works include: *An Outline of the Theory of Practice* (1972), where he presented the concept of *habitus*. His other work, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979) was named as one of the 20th century's ten most important and influential works of Sociology by the International Sociological Association.

The basic concepts in Bourdieu's work include concepts like habitus, field, and capital. According to Bourdieu, the agent is socialized in a 'field'. A field here represents an evolving set of roles and relationships in a social domain, where various forms of 'capital' such as prestige or financial resources are at stake.

As the agent accommodates assigned roles and relationships in the context of the field, the agent internalizes relationships and expectations for operating in that domain. These internalized relationships and habitual expectations and relationships therefore form, over time, the *habitus*.

Bourdieu's work attempts to integrate structure and agency dichotomy by showing that external structures are internalized into the habitus while the actions of the agent externalize interactions between actors into the social relationship in the field. Bourdieu's theory, therefore, is juxtaposition between 'externalizing the internal', and 'internalizing the external'.

8.4.2 Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann

Figure 8.5: Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann

Source: www.207.23.252.88/media/authors/author_images/peter_berger.jpg

Berger and Luckmann in their work, *Social Construction of Reality* (1966) showed that the relationship between structure and agency is dialectical in nature. They demonstrated that society forms the individuals, and at the same time, the individual too creates society. This forms a continuous loop.

8.4.3 Roberto Mangaberia Unger

Figure 8.6: Roberto Mangaberia Unger

Source: www.hannaharendtcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/unager.jpg

This social theorist and legal philosopher had developed the thesis of 'negative capability' to foster structure and agency integration. In his work on 'false necessity' and 'anti-necessitarian social theory'; Unger recognized the constraints of structure and its molding influence upon the individual, but at the same time believes that the individual is well able to resist, deny, and transcend the structure.

He termed the varieties of this resistance as 'negative capability'. Unlike other theories of structure and agency, *negative capability* according to Unger do not reduce the individual to a simple actor possessing only the dual capacity of compliance or rebellion, but rather sees the individual as being able to partake in a variety of activities of self-empowerment.

8.4.4   Anthony Giddens

Figure 8.7: Anthony Giddens

Source: www.static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2011/3/4/1299267652207/Former-LSE-head-Anthony-G-007.jpg

Contemporary sociological theory is said to be generally aimed toward an integration of structure and agency. Anthony Giddens, one of the contemporary sociological theorists, had developed *The Structuration Theory.*

In his work, *The Constitution of Society* (1984), Giddens presented a developed attempt to move beyond the differentiation or dualism of structure and agency and argues for the 'duality of

structure' - where social structure is conceived as both the medium and the outcome of social action.

According to Giddens, an agent's common interaction with the structure, as a system of norms, is described as 'structuration'. He further used the term 'reflexivity' to refer to the ability of an agent to consciously alter his or her place in the social structure.

He argued that globalization and the emergence of the 'post-traditional' or cosmopolitan society might be said to allow for 'greater social reflexivity'. He reaffirmed that the social sciences, especially sociological theory creates social knowledge, which is potentially emancipatory.

Summary of Study Session 8

In Study Session 8, you have learnt that:

1. In this lecture, we have looked at exemplars of sociological theories that attempt to integrate agency and structure.
2. Agency was defined as to micro-level, individual actors; however, it also refers to (macro) collectivities that act.
3. In like manner, while structure usually refers to large-scale social structures, it also refers to micro structures such as those involved in human interaction.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 8

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 8.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.1)

Agency is defined as _____? Fill the gap

SAQ 8.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.2)

These theorists see structure and agency as complementary forces.

WHY?

SAQ 8.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.2)

What did Ole Dreier, proposed in his work, *Psychotherapy in Everyday Life?*

SAQ 8.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.2)

According to Bourdieu, the agent is socialized in a 'field'. Further explain what a field represents

Study Session 9: Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

Introduction

The term *globalization* has recently emerged to refer to the appearance of an international network of social and economic systems that depict processes that advance world-wide exchanges of national and cultural resources. It is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture.

The origin of the concept of globalization can be dated back to the great movements of trade and empire across Asia and the Indian Ocean from the 15th century onwards. Since its inception, the concept of globalization has inspired competing definitions and interpretations.

In the same vein, the notion of cosmopolitanism represents the idea that all humans belong to a single community based on a shared morality. Let us examine the place of these two important concepts in sociological theory.

This Study Session will focus on Structure-Agency Integration. You will learn the Structure-Agency Debate, Structure-Agency Integration, Recent Developments in Structure-Agency Integration, and Structure-Agency Integration other Contemporary Theorists.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 9

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

9.1 Explain the Concept of Globalization and Cosmopolitanism (SAQ 9.1)

9.2 Describe the Globalization and Sociological Theory (SAQ 9.2)

9.3 Discuss the Dimensions of Globalization (SAQ 9.3)

9.4 Discuss the Contemporary Cosmopolitan Thinking (SAQ 9.4)

9.1   Concept of Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

It is important to note that humans have interacted over long distances for thousands of years. For instance, the overland *Silk Road* that connected Asia, Africa, and Europe is a good example of the transformative power of trans-local exchange that existed in the 'Old World'.

As peoples and nations exchanged products and ideas, there have been the spread and mixture of philosophy, religion, language, the arts, and other aspects of culture. During the 15th and 16th centuries, Europeans made important discoveries in their exploration of the oceans, including the commencement of transatlantic travel to the 'New World' of the Americas.

Since this period, global movement of people, goods, and ideas have significantly expanded. We have had the development of new forms of transportation, such as the steam ship and train, telecommunications, these have compressed 'time and space', allowing for increasingly rapid rates of global interchanges.

Figure 9.1: Global Means of Transportation

Source: www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia

In the 20th century, road vehicles and airlines were developed, and these had made transportation even faster. More recently in the 21st century, the development and advent of electronic communications, most notably mobile phones and the Internet, had brought new ways of living to people where they can be connected to billions other people across the world.

- In 20th century, road vehicles and airlines were developed; what is the impact on transportation?
- ☐ Made transportation faster

## 9.2   Globalization and Sociological Theory

The term globalization has been in increasing use since the mid-1980s. In Year 2000, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization.

Figure 9.2: The Four Basic Aspects of Globalization Identified by IMF

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

In recent times, environmental challenges such as climate change, cross-boundary water and air pollution, and over-fishing of the ocean are linked with globalization. In sociological analysis, it can be seen that globalizing processes affect and are affected by work organizations, economies, socio-cultural resources, and even the natural environment.
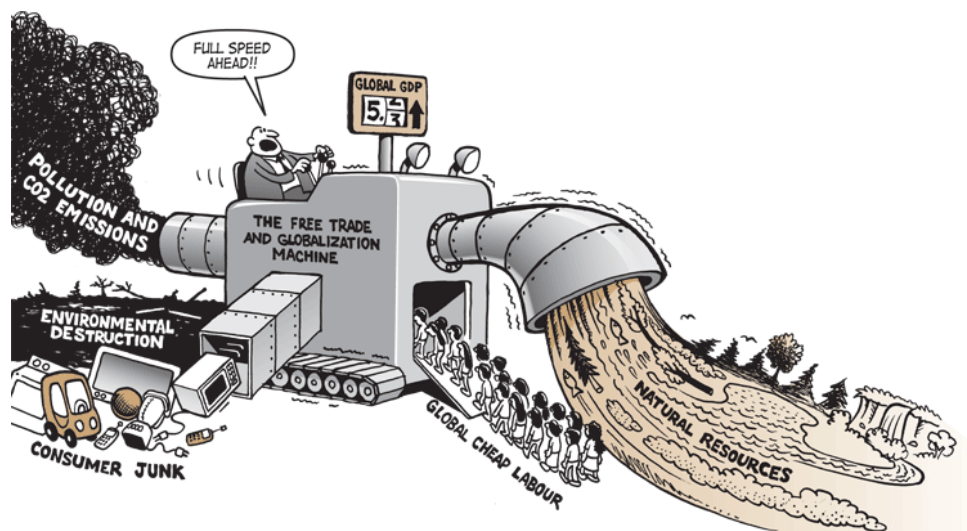
Figure 9.3: Globalization and the Environment
Source: www.stopceta.ca/@images/globalization-machine.png

Professor Roland Robertson, a sociologist, had defined globalization as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole'. Other sociologists such as Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King had further defined globalization as '…all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society'.

In his work, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Anthony Giddens defined globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.

In sociological theoretical terms, it can be seen that although in its simplistic sense, the concepts globalization and cosmopolitanism refer to the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnection; such an explanation of these concepts begs further elaboration. Consequently, globalization and cosmopolitanism can be better understood when located on a continuum that has the local, national and regional spheres.

Descriptively, at one end of the continuum lie social and economic relations and networks which are organized on a local and/or national basis; at the other end lie social and economic relations and networks which crystallize on the wider scale of regional and global interactions.

In sociological analysis, globalization and cosmopolitanism therefore imply those spatial-temporal processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across societies, cultures, regions and continents. A satisfactory explanation of these concepts needs to capture these basic elements: extensity (stretching), intensity, velocity and impact.

■ Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King defined globalization as _____?

☐ All those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society

9.3   Dimensions of Globalization

In his book, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction,* Steger had argued that in order to fully understand and grasp the concept and process of globalization and how this impact on sociological knowledge, scholars of globalization need to take a multidimensional approach to understanding globalization.

He outlined five dimensions of globalization. These include: economic, political, cultural, ecological, and ideological.

Table 9.1: The Five Dimensions of Globalization

1	**Economic globalization**	This entails the intensification and stretching of economic interrelations around the globe. It involves issues as the emergence of a new global economic order, the internationalization of trade and finance, the changing power of transnational corporations, and the enhancement of the role of international economic institutions like the IMF and World Bank.
2	**Political globalization**	Globalization is conceived here as the intensification and expansion of political interrelations around the globe. Aspects of political globalization include the modern-nation state system and its changing place in the present

		world's order, the role of global governance, and the direction of the global political systems
3	**Cultural globalization**	This refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe. Even though the concept of culture is broad and encompassing, in his discussion of globalization; Stager had defined as 'the symbolic construction, articulation, and dissemination of meaning'. Issues of interests here include discussion on the development of a global culture, or lack of a global culture, the role of the media in shaping identities and desires, and the globalization of languages
4	**Ecological globalization**	Discussions of interest under this dimension relate to global environmental and ecological concerns such as population growth, access to food, worldwide reduction in biodiversity, poverty reduction and eradication, human-induced climate change, and global environmental degradation
5	**Ideological globalization**	Under this dimension, Steger noted that what prevail here is the reign of norms, postulations, beliefs, and narratives about the concept of globalization itself. He separated ideologies that have endowed the concept of globalization with particular values and meanings into three main types

Box 9.1. Concept of Globalization with Particular Values and Meanings into three main types

These include: market globalism, justice globalism, and jihadist globalism. Steger explain them as follows:

- *Market globalism* seeks to endow 'globalization' with free-market norms and neoliberal meanings.
- *Justice globalism* involves the construction of an alternative vision of globalization based on egalitarian ideals of global solidarity and distributive justice.
- *Jihadist globalism* struggles against market- and justice globalism as it seeks to mobilize the global Muslim community of believers (umma) in defense of Islamic values and beliefs that are thought to be under severe attack by the forces of secularism and consumerism.

■ The five dimensions of globalization are?

☐ Economic, Political, Cultural, Ecological, and Ideological

9.4   Contemporary Cosmopolitan Thinking

A number of contemporary theorists have proposed directly and indirectly, various ways through which an individual can become cosmopolitan. Jacque Fresco for instance is working through the Venus Project on spreading cosmopolitan ideas across artificial boundaries that currently separate the different peoples of the world.

His ideas are anchored on understandings as touching our interdependence with nature and each other. Thich Nhat Hanh had evolved the concept of 'Inter-being' as a way of living one's life in relation to others. 'Inter-being' connotes a concept that largely resembles cosmopolitanism. Nhat Hanh's philosophical beliefs are grounded in the precepts of Buddhist teachings, which involve compassion and understanding to protect and live in harmony with all people, animals, plants, and minerals.

He went further to describe what he called *Mindfulness Training of the Order of Inter-being*. According to him, with this training, one would be aware of sufferings created by, but not limited to causes like fanaticism and intolerances that disrupt compassion and living in harmony

with others; indoctrination of narrow-minded beliefs; imposition of views; anger; and miscommunication.

He buttressed that understanding and compassion for others would surely be achieved when one understands other people's suffering and the root causes of suffering. Therefore, to be human and responsible is to recognize and understand suffering, which then leads to compassion. It is through this process that others can be recognized as humans.

Contemporary cosmopolitan thinking contends that recognizing suffering is a prerequisite to ending violence. In his work, *Scared Sacred*, Velcrow Ripper explored different sites of great suffering, and he confirmed that this ultimately led him toward developing compassion. In another work, '*The Planet*'", Paul Gilroy explores how the construction and naturalization of race and the hierarchies produced by difference shape the hatred of others.

Figure 9.4: Recognizion of Suffering

Source: www.forward.com/workspace/assets/images/articles/s-armenia-122911.jpg

It is the deconstruction of these ideologies that can lead to the compassion and humanization of others, he stressed. The role of the sociologist therefore is to make others aware e of what Judith Butler called *the precariousness of life in self and other.* Being cosmopolitan hence implies to be, above all, to be social and ethical.

In another work, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Kwame Anthony Appiah, explained how social ethics seem to operate. His explanation lies on the social ethics that: whatever obligation one might have to another, especially a foreign other, that obligation does not supersede the obligations that the person have to those people most familiar to him or her. However, Judith Butler asked, at what cost do one establish the familiar as the criterion; in response, it was shown that it is at the point of *valuing others.*

Critics of *cosmopolitanism* have argued that some forms of cosmopolitanism have failed to address the potential for economic colonization and exploitation by powerful countries over less powerful ones. Frantz Fanon in his work, *The Wretched of the Earth,* observed that when nations achieved independence from European colonizers, there was no system in place to secure their economic future; thus, they became manager(s) for Western enterprise; consequently, in practice setting up its country as the brothel of Europe.

He further argued that when 'Third World' nations are drawn into economic partnerships with global capital, unarguably to improve their national quality of life, often the only ones benefitting from this partnership are well-placed individuals and not the nation itself. Similarly, Mahmood Mamdani in his work, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* suggests that the imposition of Western cultural norms, democracy and Christianity has historically resulted in nationalist violence.

Appiah agreed that democracy has been a prerequisite for cosmopolitan intervention in developing nations. Cosmopolitanism, in these instances, appears to be a new form of colonization and imperialism: the powerful exploit the weak and the weak eventually fight back. Cosmopolitanism had been said to put nationalism as the framework for sovereign nation-state irrelevant.

With cosmopolitanism, some scholars have argued that the political system based on the nation-state has become obsolete and that it is time to design a better and more efficient alternative. Mosterin for instance had analyzed how the world political system should be organized in order to maximize individual freedom and individual opportunity.

Rejecting as topsy-turvy the metaphysical notion of free will, he focuses on political freedom, the absence of coercion or interference by others in personal decisions. Because of the tendencies to violence and aggression that lurk in human nature, some constraint had been put on freedom for peaceful and fruitful social interaction; however, Mosterin argued that the more freedom you enjoy the better social interaction you would have.

Mosterin demonstrated that there is no rational ground for curtailing the cultural freedoms of peoples as it relates to language, religion and customs, in the name of the nation, the church or the party. According to him, the *Internet* provides a much more attractive model for social organization in contemporary times than the nation-state. Mosterin further argued that there is no need for restraining the free circulation of people, ideas or goods.

Figure 9.5: Freedom Expression

Source: www.aristotleslackey.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/freedom-for-all.jpg

He postulated that the nation-state is indeed incompatible with the full development of freedom, whose blossoming requires the reorganization of the world political system along cosmopolitan lines. He proposed a world without sovereign nation-states, territorially organized in small autonomous but not-sovereign partisan politics, complemented by strong world organizations.

He emphasized the difference between international institutions, led by representatives of the national governments, and world or universal institutions, with clearly defined aims served by directors selected by their personal qualifications, independently of any national bias or proportion. However, most propositions of cosmopolitanism had been criticized, with the argument that any viable cosmopolitanism must be 'rooted' by means of a 'global patriotism' as its base.

- Appiah agreed that democracy has been a prerequisite for_____?

☐ Cosmopolitan intervention in developing nations

Summary of Study Session 9

In Study Session 9, you have learnt that:

1. The term *globalization* has recently emerged to refer to the appearance of an international network of social and economic systems that depict processes that advance world-wide exchanges of national and cultural resources.
2. It is important to note that humans have interacted over long distances for thousands of years
3. The term globalization has been in increasing use since the mid-1980s. In Year 2000, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization
4. Five dimensions of globalization. These include: economic, political, cultural, ecological, and ideological
5. A number of contemporary theorists have proposed directly and indirectly, various ways through which an individual can become cosmopolitan

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 9

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 9.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 9.1)

For people and nations to have exchanged products and ideas, what could have happened?

SAQ 9.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 9.2)

According to Anthony Giddens in his work, "*The Consequences of Modernity";* kindly defined globalization?

SAQ 9.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 9.3)

According to the Five Dimensions of Globalization, explain **"Cultural Globalization**"

SAQ 9.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 9.2)

The role of the sociologist is to make others aware of what Judith Butler called_____?

Study Session 10   Sociological Metatheorizing

Introduction

Metatheorizing has emerged as one of the current developments in sociological theory. While conventional sociologists and theorists take the social world as their subject matter; metatheorists are involved in the systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theory.

This Study Session will focus on Sociological Metatheorizing. You will learn the Concept of Sociology and Metatheorizing, Varieties of Metatheorizing, and the Levels of Social Analysis.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 10

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

10.1 Explain the Concept of Sociology and Metatheorizing (SAQ 10.1)

10.2 Describe Varieties of Metatheorizing (SAQ 10.2)

10.3 Discuss the Levels of Social Analysis (SAQ 10.3)

10.1   Concept of Sociology and Metatheorizing

It is worthy to note that sociologists are not the only ones involved in mata-analysis. They are not the only ones involved in the reflective study of their own discipline. Other social scientists such as psychologists, political scientists, and even philosophers and historian are involved in meta-analysis.
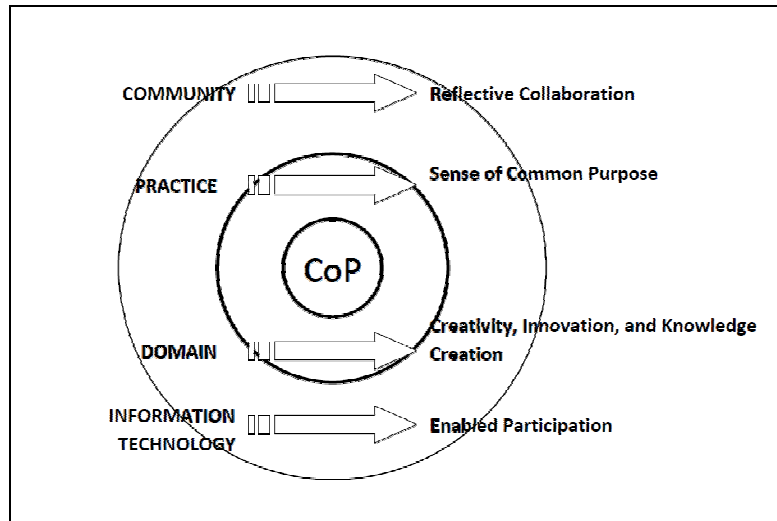
Figure 10.1: Meta- Analysis Commodity Behavious

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

Metatheorizing in Sociology therefore refers to the reflective study of the discipline of Sociology by sociologists. Meta-analysis in Sociology according to George Ritzer can be grouped under the theme: *metaSociology*. MetaSociology is defined as the reflexive study of the underlying structure of Sociology in general, as well as its various components.

This includes an analysis of substantive areas of the discipline (e.g. Sociology of work); concepts (e.g. social structure); social research methods –efforts to synthesize sociological methods (metamethods); and sociological data analysis (meta-data-analysis).

- ■ Do you think that it is only sociologists that are involved in mata-analysis?
- □ **"NO"** Sociologists are not the only ones involved in mata-analysis

10.2 Varieties of Metatheorizing

Ritzer (2008) identified three varieties of metatheorizing. His definition of these varieties hinges on the nature of the differences inherent in each of the variety. The following are the different varieties (3) of metatheorizing that Ritzer identified:

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Table 10.1: The Different Three (3) Varieties of Metatheorizing

| 1	**Metatheorizing as a means of attaining a deeper understanding of sociological theory (M_U)**	This variety of metatheorizing according to Ritzer involves the study of sociological theory in order to produce a better, more profound understanding of extant theory. Under this category, theorists are concerned with the study of other theorists and their theories, and other community of theorists, as well as the larger intellectual and social contexts of theories and theorists.
2	**Metatheorizing as a prelude to theory development (M_P)**	This involves the study of extant theory in order to produce new sociological theory.
3	**Metatheorizing as a source of perspectives that overarch sociological theory (M_O)**	This variety of metatheorizing is oriented toward the goal of producing a perspective, in other words, a metatheory, which overarches some part or all of sociological theory.
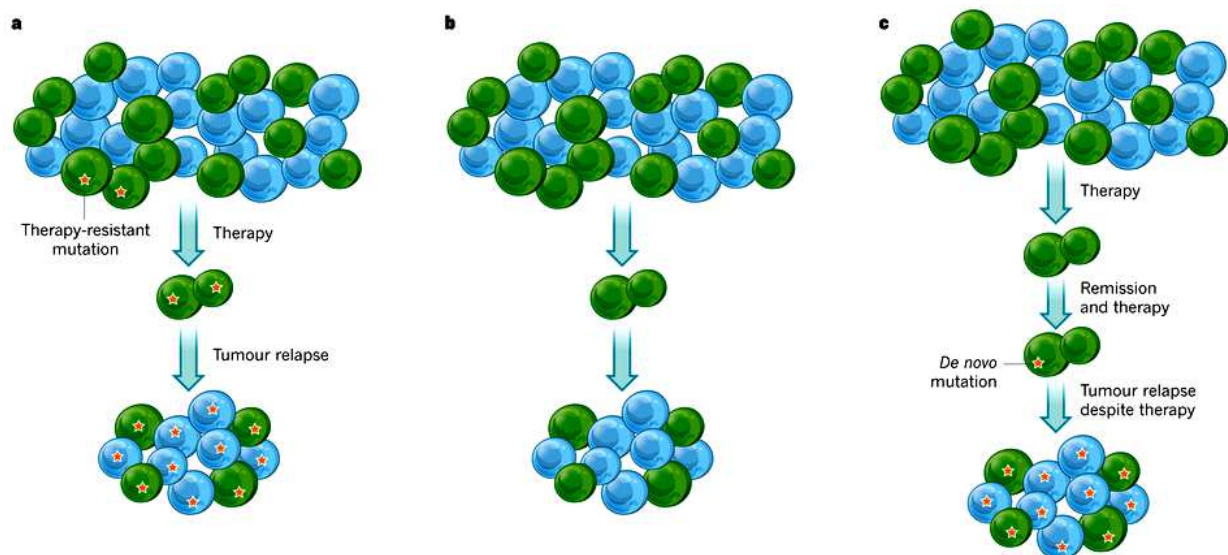
Figure 10.2: Nature of the Differences Inherent in each of the Variety

Source: www.nature.com/nature/journal/v501/n7467/images/nature12624-f6.jpg

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- Who identified three varieties of metatheorizing and when?
- Ritzer (2008)

10.3 Levels of Social Analysis

Two continua of social reality had been identified as constituting useful and major levels of the social world. These include:
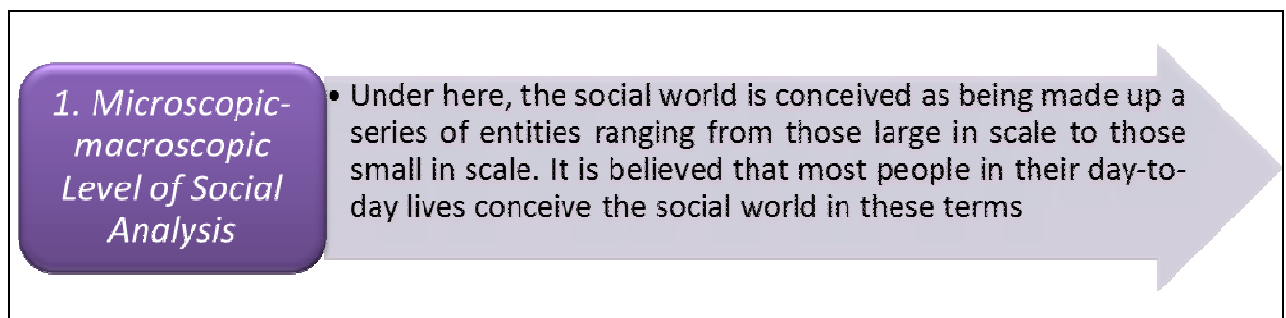
Figure 10.3: Microscopic-Macroscopic Level of Social Analysis

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

The basic assumption here is the simple idea that social phenomena vary greatly in size. Hence, at the macro end of the continuum are such large-scalesocial phenomena such as groups of societies (for example, the world capitalist system), societies and cultures.

Whilst at the micro end are individual actors and their thoughts and actions. In between is believed to be a wide range of meso-level phenomena such as groups, collectivities, social classes, and organizations.

A primary challenge of this level of social analysis is the fact that there are no clear dividing lines between the micro social units and the macro units. There would be difficulty therefore to recognize the distinctions when applying the micro-macro social analytical schema.

Figure 10.3: The Pyramid of Capitalist System

Figure 10.3: Objective-Subjective Level of Social Analysis

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

At the micro, or individual level, there are subjective mental processes of an actor and the objective patterns of action and interaction in which the person engages him or herself.

Subjective here implies what solely occurs in the realm of ideas; objective, relates to real, material events.

The same differentiation is found at both the macro end of the continuum. A society is therefore made up of objective structures such as bureaucracies, governments, and laws; and subjective phenomena such as norms and values.

Summary of Study Session 10

In Study Session 10, you have learnt that:

1. Metatheorizing has emerged as one of the current developments in sociological theory. While conventional sociologists and theorists take the social world as their subject matter; metatheorists are involved in the systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theory

2. Metatheorizing in Sociology therefore refers to the reflective study of the discipline of Sociology by sociologists

3. Ritzer (2008) identified three varieties of metatheorizing. His definition of these varieties hinges on the nature of the differences inherent in each of the variety

4. Two continua of social reality had been identified as constituting useful and major levels of the social world

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 10

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 10.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 10.1)

Metatheorizing in Sociology therefore refers to?

SAQ 10.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 10.2)

Metatheorizing as a means of attaining a deeper understanding of sociological theory (M_U); explain further according to the study

SAQ 10.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 10.3)

Explain "Objective-Subjective Level of Social Analysis"

Study Session 11   Feminist Theory

Introduction

In broad terms, feminist theory differs from most sociological theories in that it possessed an interdisciplinary character involving works of an international community of scholars and other activists. It is an unequivocal fact that feminist theories have severally produced a revolutionary switch in our understanding of the world that previously holds men as 'masters'.

The theory has helped to deconstruct established systems of knowledge by demonstrating the masculinist biases and gender politics that have framed established knowledge systems in our world. In this study, you will define feminist theory, and also providing a brief history of feminism in the discipline of Sociology.

This Study Session will focus on Sociological Metatheorizing. You will learn the Concept of Feminist Theory, the Historical Antecedents of Feminism, and the Toward a Feminist Sociological Theory.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 11

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

11.1 Explain the Concept of Feminist Theory (SAQ 11.1)

11.2 Discuss the Historical Antecedents of Feminism (SAQ 11.2)

11.3 Describe the Toward a Feminist Sociological Theory (SAQ 11.3)

11.1   Concept of Feminist Theory

Feminist theory can be defined as a generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centred point of view. The feminist theory is considered women-centred because of two obvious reasons: the start-point of all investigations under this theory begins with exploring the conditions and experiences of women in society.

The other reason why the feminist theory is considered women-centred is because the theory seeks to describe the social world from the distinctive point of view of women.
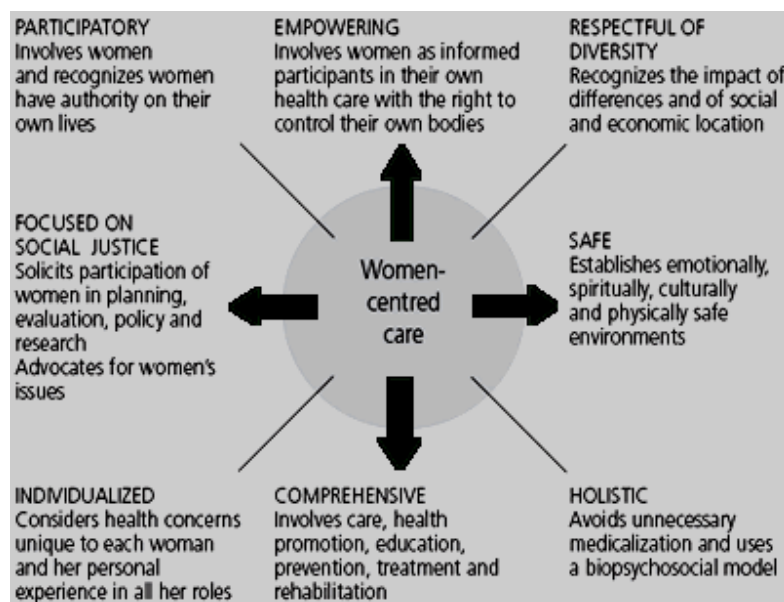
Figure 11.1: Women-Centered Flow

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

■   What is the other reason why the feminist theory is considered women-centred?

☐   The theory seeks to describe the social world from the distinctive point of view of women

11.2   Historical Antecedents of Feminism

Ritzer (2008) had shown that in one sense or the other, there has always been a feminist perspective. Especially where are subordinated, and they have been subordinated almost always and everywhere, they seem to have recognized this subordination and have protested in some form. From the Western point of view, the formal dating of feminism is said to begin with published works of women protests.

Figure 11.2: Women Protests

Source: www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/National_Women's_Day.jpg

It is worthy to note that the record of feminism is not one of steady, uninterrupted development. However, the high points of feminist activity and writing occurred during the liberationist periods of modern Western history that is around the 1780s and 1790s.

The history of feminist mobilization is divided into the periods, known also as *waves:*

Table 11.1: The Waves History of Feminist Mobilization

1	First Wave Feminism	In the United States of America especially, this period of feminist mobilization was focused on women's struggle for political rights, particularly the right to vote. This period is marked by two important dates – 1848, when the first women's rights convention was held in New York; and 1920, when the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.
2	Second Wave Feminism	This period is said to occur between 1960-1990. It is a period where women worked to translate their basic political rights into economic and social equality and to re-conceptualize relations between men and women with the concept and notion of '*gender'*.
3	Third Wave Feminism	This period of women mobilization described feminist ideas of the generation of women who will live their adult life in the twenty-first century.

■ "Record of feminism is one of steady, uninterrupted development". True or False?

☐ **"FALSE"** Record of feminism is not one of steady, uninterrupted development

11.3 Toward a Feminist Sociological Theory

In recent times, feminist Sociology has begun to create a general sociological theory focused on the problems of structure and agency, the micro and macro linkage, the nature of power, inequality, and social change. These analyses understand social life as an ongoing process of enactments of oppression and responses to oppression.

Feminists are also developing a vocabulary that allows feminist theorists to consider how the everyday lives of women are patterned by structural inequality. This emergent feminist theory views human agents as living and acting within a complex field of power that they are determined by and that in their agency they both reproduced and contest.

■ Feminists are developing a vocabulary that allows feminist theorists to_____?

☐ Consider how the everyday lives of women are patterned by structural inequality.

Summary of Study Session 11

In Study Session 11, you have learnt that:

1. In broad terms, feminist theory differs from most sociological theories in that it possessed an interdisciplinary character involving works of an international community of scholars and other activists

2. Feminist theory can be defined as a generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centred point of view

3. Ritzer (2008) had shown that in one sense or the other, there has always been a feminist perspective

4. In recent times, feminist Sociology has begun to create a general sociological theory focused on the problems of structure and agency, the micro and macro linkage, the nature of power, inequality, and social change

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 11

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 11.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 11.1)

Define Feminist Theory

SAQ 11.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 11.2)

Explain "Second Wave Feminism"

SAQ 11.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 11.2)

Emergent feminist theory views human agents' as_____?

Study Session 12   Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions

Introduction

The impulse for contemporary feminist theory is believed to begin with a seemingly deceptive question: 'and what about the women?'

This Study Session will focus on Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions. You will learn the Concept of Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions, and the Three (3) Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 12

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

12.1 Explain the Concept of Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions (SAQ 12.1)

12.2 Discuss the Three (3) Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions (SAQ 12.2)

12.1   Concept of Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions

It is interesting to note here that feminist theory is not just about women, nor its major project the creation of a middle-range theory of gender relations. Instead, Karl Marx's epistemological position clearly showed that the knowledge people have of society, what they assume to be an absolute and universal statement about reality reflects the experience of those who economically and politically rule the world.
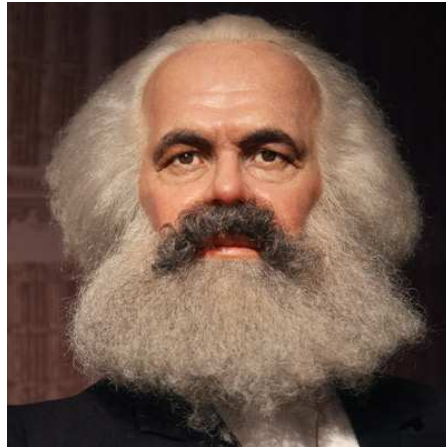
Figure 12.1 Karl Marx's

Source: www.biography.com/imported/images/Biography/Images/Profiles/M/Karl-Marx-9401219-1-402.jpg

Feminism's basic theoretical questions have indeed produced a revolutionary turn in our understanding of the world. Meaning that what we have often taken as universal and absolute knowledge of the world is in fact, knowledge derived from the experiences of a powerful section of society, which portrays men as 'masters'.

Likewise, this knowledge is re-interpreted and re-construed when viewed from the vantage point of a hitherto invisible, unacknowledged 'underdog', women, who in 'subordinated but indispensable 'serving' roles have worked to sustain and re-create our world. This discovery no doubt largely raises questions about everything we thought we have known about society, and its implications constitute the relevance of contemporary feminist theory's essence for sociological theory.

- Feminist theory it is about women, and its major project the creation of a middle-range theory of gender relations. True or False?

- ☐ Feminist theory is not just about women, nor its major project the creation of a middle-range theory of gender relations

12.2 The Three (3) Feminism's Basic Theoretical Questions

The three (3) Basic Feminism Theoretical Questions are as follow;

12.2.1 First Basic Question for Feminists

The first basic question for feminists as stated earlier is *'...and what about the women' (Ritzer, 2008).* What is means is that where are the women in any given situation being investigated? How are they experiencing or have experienced the situation? What contribution has they made to the situation? What value does this contribution mean to these women? In the past years, there have been generalized answers to this first basic theoretical question of feminism.

Answers hinge on the fact that women are indeed present in most social situations; nonetheless, where they are not present, it is not because they lack ability or interest but because there have been deliberate efforts to exclude them. The feminist theory holds that although women are actively present in most social situations, the publics – both men and women- have been blind to their presence.

Moreover, women's role in most social situations, though essential, has been different from, less privileged than, and subordinate to the roles of men. This invisibility is in fact, one of the indicators of this inequality.

■ The feminist theory holds that although women are actively present in most social situations, the publics_____?

☐ Both men and women- have been blind to their presence

12.2.2 Second Basic Question for Feminists

The second basic theoretical question of feminism is, "Why is all this as it is?" In answering this question, feminist theory has produced the concept of *gender.*

Box 12.1. Distinctions Between Biologically and Socially

Feminist theorists have made it possible for people to see the distinctions between

(i)   Biologically determined attributes associated with male and female; and

(ii)   Socially learned behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity.

They have distinguished these socially learned behaviours of masculinity and femininity by calling these behaviours gender-based behaviour.

Although there are varieties of debates as regards what gender really mean; on the whole, a starting point of agreement among all these debates is an understanding of gender as a social construction, something not emanating from nature but created by people as part of the processes of group life.

- ■ Biologically determines _____?

- ☐ Attributes associated with male and female

12.2.3 Third Basic Question for Feminists

The third feminist basic theoretical question is "How can we change and improve the social world so as to make it a more just place for all people?" Feminism indeed shares the commitment of critical social theory that seeks for social transformation in society for the interest of justice. The commitment here lies on how feminist believe their work will help to improve the daily lives of the people they study.

On the whole, there is a fourth feminist question which feminist theorists have recently raised: "And what about the differences among women?" The answers to this question have led to the general conclusion that the invisibility, inequality and role differences in relation to men which generally characterized women's lives are profoundly affected by a woman's social location – that is, by her class, race, age, affectional preference, marital status, religion, ethnicity, and global location.

■ The third feminist basic theoretical question is?

☐ "How can we change and improve the social world so as to make it a more just place for all people?"

Summary of Study Session 12

In Study Session 12, you have learnt that:

1. In broad terms, feminist theory differs from most sociological theories in that it possessed an interdisciplinary character involving works of an international community of scholars and other activists

2. Feminist theory can be defined as a generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centred point of view

3. Ritzer (2008) had shown that in one sense or the other, there has always been a feminist perspective

4. In recent times, feminist Sociology has begun to create a general sociological theory focused on the problems of structure and agency, the micro and macro linkage, the nature of power, inequality, and social change

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 12

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 12.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 12.1)

Feminism's basic theoretical questions have indeed produced a revolutionary turn in our understanding of the world. Meaning that what _____?

SAQ 12.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 12.2)

Feminism indeed shares the commitment of critical social theory that seeks for social transformation in society for the interest of justice. The commitment is?

Study Session 13   Feminists and Mainstream Sociology

Introduction

It is worthy note that the contributions, roles and experiences of women were not a major part of sociological theory and social research for the most part of the history of Sociology. This means that traditional sociological theories included little that was relevant to the issue of gender inequality.

This Study Session will focus on Feminists and Mainstream Sociology. You will learn about the women sociologists who had made significant contributions to Sociology and how they were marginalized by the men who dominated the discipline.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 13

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

13.1 Explain the Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) Contributions (SAQ 13.1)

13.2 Explain the Jessie Shirley Bernard (1903-1996) Contributions (SAQ 13.2)

13.3 Explain the Patricia Hill Collins Contributions (SAQ 13.3)

13.1   Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) Contributions

Harriet Martineau was an English social theorist, often regarded as the first female sociologist. She wrote about 35 books and a multitude of essays from a feminine perspective. She also translated various works of Auguste Comte. She held the view that 'when one studies a society, one must focus on all its aspects, including key political, religious, and social institutions".

She believed a thorough sociological analysis was necessary to understand woman's status. While she was commonly described as having a masculine intellect, Martineau introduced feminist sociological perspectives in her writing on otherwise overlooked issues such as marriage, children, domestic and religious life, and race relations.

Figure 13.1 Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)

Source: www.i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/01845/katemiddleton_1845748c.jpg

- Harriet Martineau was _____ theorist, often regarded as the?
- ☐ English social theorist and the first female sociologist

13.2   Jessie Shirley Bernard (1903-1996) Contributions

Jessie Bernard was a sociologist and a distinguished feminist scholar. She was a persistent forerunner of feminist thought in American Sociology and her life's work is characterized as extraordinarily productive spanning several intellectual and political eras.
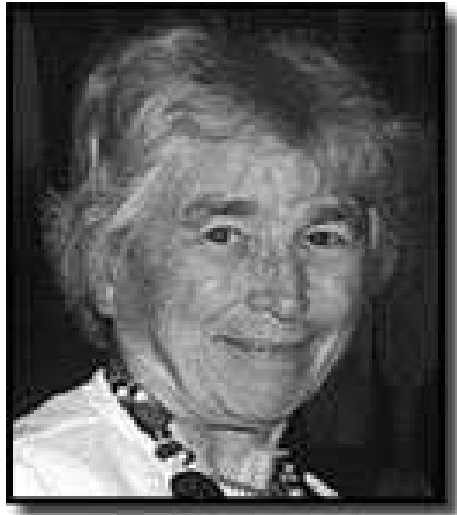
Figure 13.2 Jessie Shirley Bernard (1903-1996)

Source: www.ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/516i7nAGYYL._AA160_.jpg

Bernard studied and wrote about women's lives since the late 1930s and her contributions to Sociology and feminist theory regarding women, sex, marriage, and the interaction with the family and community are well acknowledged. Jessie Bernard viewed works as a movement towards contemporary feminism or what she also referred to as *the feminist enlightenment.*

Since the mid-1940s, Jessie's focus was to increase understanding of the effects of sexism on women's experience of marriage, parenting, education and economic life. This ultimately formed the largest part of her contributions to Sociology and feminist theory.

- Bernard viewed works as a movement towards contemporary feminism; what does she referred it as?

- The feminist enlightenment

13.3 Patricia Hill Collins Contributions

Patricia Collins is currently a Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland.

Figure 13.3 Patricia Hill Collins

Source: www.gse.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/patricia_hill_collins.jpg

She work is primarily concerned with issues involving feminism and gender within the African-American community. In her work '***Black Feminist Thought:*** *Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*' published in 1990, she analyzed a wide range of issues including fiction, poetry, music and oral history. Collin's work concluded with three central claims; that

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Box 13.1. Collin's Work Concluded with Three Central Claims

- Oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation are intersecting, mutually constructing systems of power. Collins utilizes the term 'intersectionality', to refer to multiple forms of oppression.

- Because Black women have unique histories at the intersections of systems of power, they have created world views out of a need for self-definition and to work on behalf of social justice.

- Black women's specific experiences with intersecting systems of oppression provide a window into these same processes for other individuals and social groups.

Summary of Study Session 13

In Study Session 13, you have learnt that:

1. In broad terms, feminist theory differs from most sociological theories in that it possessed an interdisciplinary character involving works of an international community of scholars and other activists

2. Feminist theory can be defined as a generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centred point of view

3. Ritzer (2008) had shown that in one sense or the other, there has always been a feminist perspective

4. In recent times, feminist Sociology has begun to create a general sociological theory focused on the problems of structure and agency, the micro and macro linkage, the nature of power, inequality, and social change

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 13

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 13.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 13.1)

Martineau introduced feminist sociological perspectives in her writing_____? Fill the gap.

SAQ 13.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 13.2)

Since mid-1940s, Jessie's focus was to increase understanding of the effects of sexism. How?

SAQ 13.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 13.3)

In Patricia Collins work '***Black Feminist Thought:*** *Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*' published in 1990, she analyzed a wide range of issues including_____?

Study Session 14   Varieties of Feminist Theory

Introduction

Feminists believe that women are oppressed simple due to their sexuality and due the dominant ideology of patriarchy. Arguments of feminists dwell on the fact that ridding society of patriarchy will result in liberation for women, men, minorities, and gays.

This Study Session will focus on Varieties of Feminist Theory. You will learn the Feminism Ideology, Radical Feminism, Liberal Feminism, Socialist Feminism, Cultural Feminism, and Ecofeminism.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 14

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

14.1 Explain the Feminism Ideology (SAQ 14.1)

14.2 Discuss the Radical Feminism Theory (SAQ 14.2)

14.3 Describe the Liberal Feminism Theory (SAQ 14.3)

14.4 Discuss the Socialist Feminism Theory (14.4)

14.5 Explain the Cultural Feminism Theory (SAQ 14.5)

14.6 Understand the Ecofeminism Theory (SAQ 14.6)

14.1   Feminism Ideology

As stated earlier, feminism is the organized movement which promotes equality for men and women in political, economic and social spheres. Feminists believe that women are oppressed simple due to their sexuality and due to the dominant ideology of patriarchy. Arguments of feminists dwell on the fact that ridding society of patriarchy will result in liberation for women, men, minorities, and gays.

Figure 14.1 Equality for Men and Women in Political, Economic and Social Spheres

Source: www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/Ati_woman.jpg

Patriarchy is the system which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions. Throughout history men have had greater power in both the public and private spheres. To maintain this power, men often create boundaries and obstacles for women, thus making it hard for women to access and hold power. There is an unequal access to power. Patriarchy also includes the oppression of minorities and homosexuals.

Feminism ideology has taken many different forms. In recent times, there are as many definitions of feminism as there are feminists. Each definition of feminism depends on a number of factors including one's beliefs, history and culture. The following are some of the varieties of feminist theory.

■ What is the effect of Patriarchy System to Women?

☐ Patriarchy is the system which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions.

14.2 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism promotes the basis for many of the ideas of feminism. Feminists here usually disagree with the ideals of the liberal feminists, because radical feminists believe that society must be changed at its core in order to dissolve patriarchy, not just through acts of legislation.

Unfortunately, this type of feminism also attracts a lot of negative media attention creating criticism of feminism.

Radical feminists believe that the domination of women is the oldest and worst kind of oppression in the world. They believe this because it spans across the world oppressing women of different races, ethnicities, classes and cultures. Radical feminists want to free both men and women from the rigid gender roles that society has imposed upon them.

Figure 14.2: Oppressed Women (Raped Victims)

Source: www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/DRC_raped_women.jpg

Radical feminist believe that it is the sex-gender system that has created oppression; thus, radical feminist's mission is to overthrow this system by any possible means. Sometimes radical feminists believe that they must rage a war against men-patriarchy, and the gender system which confines them to rigid social roles. They completely reject these roles, all aspects of patriarchy, and in some cases, they reject men as well.

Radical feminists emphasize their difference from men. They usually form groups that exclude males completely. This type of feminist highlights the importance of individual feelings, experiences and relationships. Radical feminists have divided into two groups with very different views. These include *radical-libertarian feminism* and *radical-cultural feminism*.

Radical-Libertarian feminists	Radical-Cultural feminist
• believe that femininity and reproduction limit women's capacity to contribute to society. Thus, women need to be androgynous (genderless). Radical-Libertarian feminists would like to violate sexual norms and believe that women should control every aspect of their sexuality. They also advocate for artificial means of reproduction so that less time is devoted to pregnancy and more time is devoted to worthwhile activities. They are strong supporters of abortion, contraceptives and other forms of birth control	• views are dramatically different from that of Radical-Libertarian feminists. The Radical-Cultural feminists believe that women should encompass their femininity because it is better than masculinity. Radical-cultural feminists see a link between sex, female subordination, porn, rape and abuse. These vices they advocated must be eliminated. Yet another opposing view is that reproduction is the source of power for women. They believe that men are jealous of women, and that they try to control reproduction through means of technology

Figure 14.2: Radical-Libertarian Feminism and Radical-Cultural Feminism

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

14.3 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism was most popular in the 1950's and 1960's during the period of civil rights movements. The main view of liberal feminists is that all people are created equal by God and deserve equal rights. These feminists believe that oppression exists because of the way in which men and women are socialized, which supports patriarchy and keeps men in power positions.

Figure 14.3: Liberalism *(Natural Rights Liberal Thinkers use to Justify Revolution)*

Source:

www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/eb/Women's_March_on_Versailles01.jpg

Liberal feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts and should be given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres. Women should have the right to choose, not have their life chosen for them because of their sex. Essentially, women must be like men.

Liberal feminists create and support acts of legislation that remove the barriers for women. These acts of legislation demand equal opportunities and rights for women, including equal access to jobs and equal pay. Liberal feminists believe that removing these barriers directly challenges the ideologies of patriarchy, as well as liberates women.

Liberal feminists are responsible for many important acts of legislation that have greatly increased the status of women, including reforms in welfare, education and health. Unfortunately, liberal feminism has been known to only concentrate on the legislation aspect in the fight against patriarchy. It has been criticized for not breaking down the deeper ideologies of society and patriarchy. Also, it has been criticized for ignoring race and class issues.

- ■ Liberal feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts and should be _____?

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Given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres

14.4   Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminists believe that there is a direct link between class structure and the oppression of women. They believe that society rewards working men because they produce tangible, tradable goods. On the other hand, women's work in the domestic sphere is not valued by the capitalist society because women do not produce a tangible, tradable good. This gives men power and control over women.

Figure 14.4: Social Women

Source: www.regalrealness.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/group-of-african-american-women.jpg

Socialist feminists reject the idea that biology predetermines ones gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both the public and private spheres. Socialist feminists also challenge ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy. Much like the views of radical feminists, socialist feminists believe that although women are divided by class, race, ethnicity and religion, they all experience the same oppression simply for being a woman.

Socialist feminist believe that the way to end this oppression is to put an end to class and gender. Women must work side by side men in the political sphere. In order to get anything accomplished, women must work with men, as opposed to ostracizing them. There must be a coalition between the two and they must see each other as equals in all spheres of life. In contrast to ideals of liberal feminism, which tend to focus on the individual woman, the socialist feminist theory focuses on the broader context of social relations in the community and includes aspects

of race, ethnicity and other differences.

■ "Socialist feminists believe that there is a direct link between class structure and the oppression of women" True or False?

☐ TRUE

14.5 Cultural Feminism

Cultural feminists believe that there are fundamental, biological differences between men and women, and that women should celebrate these differences. Women are inherently more kind and gentle. Cultural feminists believe that because of these differences, if women ruled the world there would be no more war and it would be a better place. Essentially, a woman's way is the right and better way for everyone.

Theorists attempt to categorize that Western society values male thought and the ideas of independence, hierarchy, competition and domination. While the female values ideas such as interdependence, cooperation, relationships, community, sharing, joy, trust and peace.

Unfortunately, says the cultural feminist, these ideas are not valued in contemporary western societies. Cultural feminists are usually non-political, instead focusing on individual change and influencing or transforming society through this individual change. They usually advocate for a separate female counter-culture as a way to change society but not completely disconnect from the men.

■ Cultural feminists are usually non-political, instead its _____?

☐ Focusing on individual change and influencing or transforming society through this individual change

14.6 Ecofeminism

Eco-feminists believe that patriarchy and male domination is harmful to women, as well as the physical environment and ecosystem. They argue that there is a link between a male's desire to dominate unruly women and the environment. Eco-feminists show that men believe that they must tame and conquer both in order to have complete power.

Hence, ecofeminists argue that it is this desire that destroys both women and the Earth.

Ecofeminists believe that women have a central role in preserving nature because woman understand and are one with nature. There is a deep connection that men cannot understand between the Earth and women, hence the terms Mother Nature or Mother Earth. Ecofeminist believe women need to use their superior insight to reveal how humans can live in harmony with each other and with nature.

■　Ecofeminist believe women need to use their superior insight to reveal how _____?

☐　Humans can live in harmony with each other and with nature

Summary of Study Session 14

In Study Session 14, you have learnt that:

1. Feminists believe that women are oppressed simple due to their sexuality and due the dominant ideology of patriarchy
2. Patriarchy is the system which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions
3. Radical feminists believe that the domination of women is the oldest and worst kind of oppression in the world
4. Liberal feminism was most popular in the 1950's and 1960's during the period of civil rights movements.
5. Socialist feminists believe that there is a direct link between class structure and the oppression of women
6. Cultural feminists believe that there are fundamental, biological differences between men and women, and that women should celebrate these differences
7. Eco-feminists believe that patriarchy and male domination is harmful to women, as well as the physical environment and ecosystem

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 14

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 14.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 14.1)

1. Define feminists?

2. What is patriarchy?

SAQ 14.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 14.2)

1. Explian radical feminists

2. Radical feminists have divided into two groups with very different views, what are the groups?

SAQ 14.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 14.3)

1. _____ believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts and should be given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres.

2. Briefly explain the main view of liberal feminists

SAQ 14.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 14.4)

1. Discuss socialist feminists

2. Socialist feminist believe that the way to end this oppression is to put an end to_____ and_____

SAQ 14.5 (Tests Learning Outcomes 14.5)

1. In cultural feminist, _____ attempt to categorize that Western society values male thought and the ideas of independence, hierarchy, competition and domination. While the female values ideas such as interdependence, cooperation, relationships, community, sharing, joy, trust and peace.

2. Cultural feminists believe that there are_____ and _____ between men and women, and that women should celebrate these differences.

SAQ 14.6 (Tests Learning Outcomes 14.6)

According to the study, kindly define Eco-feminists?

Study Session 15   Postmodern Social Theory

Introduction

In recent years, most scholars believed that society is now postmodern. The fundamental nexus of their thinking lies on the fact that not only that these latest developments in art, architecture, Sociology and literature for instance, come after the modern, but that there are problems with the modern that the postmodernists are pointing out and endeavouring to tackle.

All the classical and modern sociological theories discussed in the preceding lectures are indeed very important and will continue to be important and relevant. Nevertheless, postmodern social theory is having an increasingly significant impact on sociological theory.

This Study Session examines developments on postmodern social theory, its theoretical perspectives and theorists, its theoretical perspectives and theorists. You will learn the concept of Metanarratives and why is the concept of Hermeneutic circle relevant in postmodern social theory?

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 15

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

1.1 Explain the Concept of Metanarratives (SAQ 15.1)

1.2 Discuss the Concept of Hermeneutic Circle Relevant (SAQ15.2)

15.1   Concept of Metanarratives

Whilst many sociologists, and some sociological theories continue to undermine postmodern social theory; however, the fact remains that postmodern social theory can no longer be ignored. It would be vital for us to show the difference between sociological theories and social theories. Pointedly, sociological theories tend to reflect developments that have occurred largely within the discipline of Sociology and that are of interest mainly by sociologists. On the other hand,

social theories tend to be multidisciplinary. The difference between sociological and social theory is not really clear-cut.

Figure 15.1: Concept of Metanarratives

Source:

www.metanarrative.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/pomdsm.jpg%3Fw%3D392%26h%3D318

Box 15.1. The Difference Between Sociological Theories and Social Theories

Sociological theories tend to reflect developments that have occurred largely within the discipline of Sociology and that are of interest mainly by sociologists. On the other hand, social theories tend to be multidisciplinary

- ■ Look again at the concept of metanarratives, differentiate between sociological theories and social theories

- ☐ Sociological theories tend to reflect developments that have occurred largely within the discipline of Sociology and that are of interest mainly by sociologists. On the other hand, social theories tend to be multidisciplinary

15.2   The Concept of Hermeneutic Circle Relevant in Postmodern Social Theory

It is important to note that there is great diversity among postmodern thinkers; hence, it is pretty difficult to offer generalizations on which the majority of them would agree. Smart (1993) had differentiated three postmodernist thinking or positions.
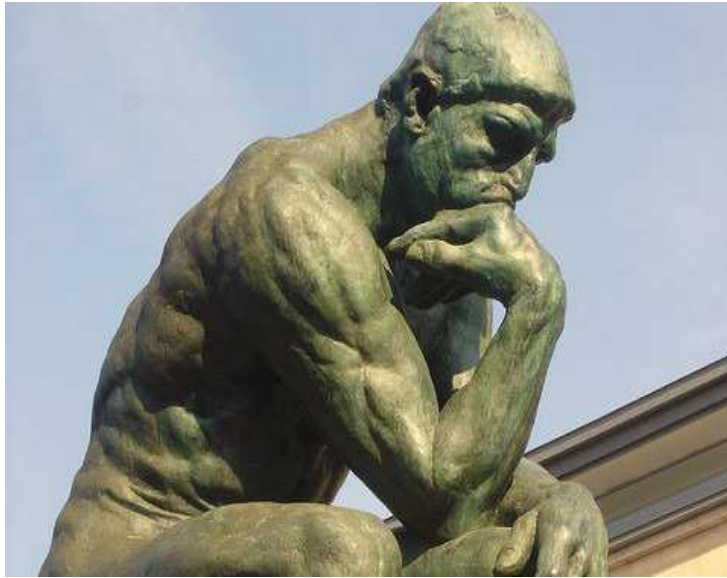
15.2.1 The Postmodern Thinking

According to him, the first, extreme position holds that there has been a radical rupture in society; thus, modern society has been replaced by a postmodern society. Proponents of this point of view include scholars like Jean Baudrillard (Armitage, 2005); Genosko, etc.

The second position of postmodern thinking is that although a change has taken place, postmodernism has grown out and is continuing with modernism. Adherents of this position include Marxian thinkers like Fredric Jameson, Ernesto Laclau and other postmodern feminists such as Nancy Fraser.

Finally, there is the position adopted by Smart himself, who, rather than viewing modernism and postmodernism as epochs, this position advocates that both modernism and postmodernism should be viewed as being engaged in a long-running and on-going set of relationships, with postmodernism continually pointing out the limitation of postmodernism.

Though useful, Smart's typology had been severally criticized by most postmodernists as they argued that this typology has simplified and greatly diversified their ideas and distorting their ideas in the process.

Figure15.2: Postmodern Thinking

**Source:** www.grist.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/the-thinker-statue-flickr-satyakam-khadikar-480.jpg

- According to the study, the second position of postmodern thinking states that……..

- ☐ Although a change has taken place, postmodernism has grown out and is continuing with modernism

15.2.2 Some Influential Postmodern Thinkers

Some Influential Postmodern Thinkers are as follow;

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Martin Heidegger is well known for rejecting the philosophical basis of the concepts of *subjectivity* and *objectivity*. He asserted that similar grounding oppositions in logic ultimately refer to one another. In place of these concepts in our understanding of social reality; Heidegger advocated an active process of elucidation of which he called the *Hermeneutic Circle*. This process according to him stressed the historicity and cultural construction of concepts while simultaneously promoting the necessity of a temporal and an essential understanding of them.
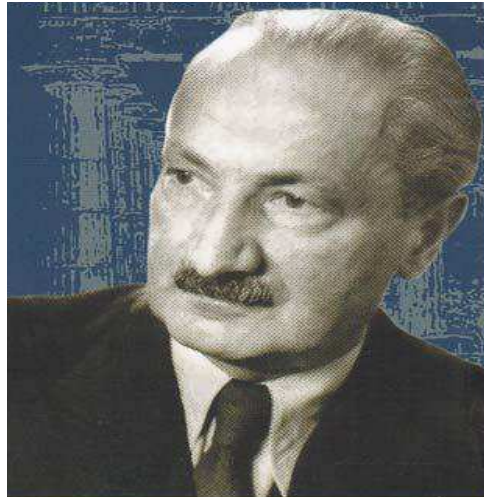
Figure 15.3: Martin Heidegger

Source: www.pictures2.todocoleccion.net/tc/2009/10/05/15226750.jpg

In this vein, he asserted that it was the task of contemporary sociological theorists to recover the original question of '*Being-in-the-World*'. He further showed that this can be done be we asking what constitutes the grounding conditions in ourselves and in the World. Heidegger shares an affinity with the late Romantic philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, a prominent proponent of Post-structuralism and Postmodernist thought.

Heidegger's influence on postmodernist thinkers dwells mostly in his critique of the subject-object or sense-knowledge division implicit in Rationalism, Empiricism and Methodological Naturalism. Another influence is his repudiation of the idea that facts exist outside or separately from the process of thinking and speaking these facts.

■ Heidegger's influence on postmodernist thinkers; how?

☐ He dwells mostly in his critique of the subject-object or sense-knowledge division implicit in Rationalism, Empiricism and Methodological Naturalism

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)

Derrida re-examined the fundamentals of writing and its consequences on philosophy in general and sociological theory in particular. He sought to undermine the language of the 'presence' as a

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point of departure from Heidegger's notion of *Deconstruction*. Derrida utilized, like Heidegger, references that articulated the notion of implicit circularity between premises and conclusions, origins and manifestations.
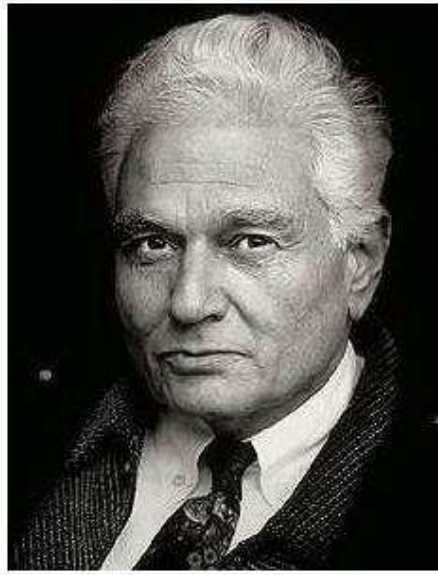
Figure 15.4: Jacques Derrida

Source: www.humanities.uci.edu/remembering_jd/derrida.jpg

Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

Foucault introduced concepts to sociological theory; concepts such as 'discursive regime'. Likewise, he also re-invoked concepts of older philosophers and other social theorists. Such concepts include concepts like 'episteme' and 'genealogy'. He used these concepts to explain the relationship that involves phenomena like meaning, power, and social behaviour within social orders.

Figure 15.5: Michel Foucault

In direct opposition to what have been typified as Modernist perspectives on epistemology, Foucault argued that rational judgment, social practice and what he called 'bio-power' are not only inseparable but co-determinant.

While Foucault himself was deeply involved in a number of progressive political causes and maintained close personal ties with members of the far-Left, he was also controversial with Leftist thinkers of his day, including those associated with various strains of Marxism for his rejection of what he deemed to be Enlightenment concepts of freedom, liberation, self-determination and human nature.

Instead, Foucault focused on the ways in which such constructs had fostered cultural hegemony, violence and exclusion. Foucault was known for his controversial beliefs, such as 'language is oppression', meaning that language functions in such a way as to render nonsensical, false or silent tendencies that might otherwise threaten or undermine the distributions of power backing a society's conventions - even when such distributions purport to celebrate liberation and expression or value minority groups and perspectives. His writings have had a major influence on the larger body of postmodern academic literature.

- ■ While Foucault was deeply involved in a number of progressive political causes and maintained close personal ties with members of the far-Left, he was also controversial with?

☐ Leftist thinkers of his day, including those associated with various strains of Marxism for his rejection of what he deemed to be Enlightenment concepts of freedom, liberation, self-determination and human nature

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998)

Lyotard identified a crisis in the 'discourses of the Human Sciences' which is traceable to the advent of the 'computerized' or 'telematic' era. To academia, this crisis affects both the motivations and justification procedures for making research claims. He claim that values that have validated the basic efforts of academic research since the late 18th century might no longer be valid, especially in Social Science & Humanities research.

As formal conjecture about real-world issues becomes inextricably linked to automated calculation, information storage and retrieval, such knowledge becomes increasingly '*exteriorised*' from its knowers in the form of information. Knowledge is then materialized and made into a commodity exchanged between producers and consumers; it ceases to be either an idealistic end-in-itself or a tool capable of bringing about liberty or social benefit; it is stripped of its humanistic and spiritual associations, its connection with education, teaching and human development, being simply rendered as '*data*' - omnipresent, material, unending and without any contexts or pre-requisites.
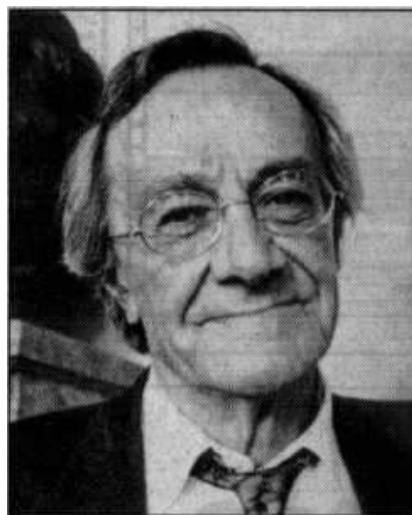
Figure 15.6: Jean-Francois Lyotard

Source: www.stumblingthroughtheology.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/lyotard.jpg

Furthermore, the 'diversity' of claims made by various disciplines assume the status of lacking any unifying principle or intuition; as objects of study become more and more specialized due to the emphasis on specificity, precision and uniformity of reference that competitive, database-oriented research implies. The value-premises upholding academic research have been maintained by what Lyotard considers to be quasi-mythological beliefs about human purpose, human reason and human progress.

He considered this too large a background for understanding human relations, he called these large-backgrounds, *'Metanarratives'*. Lyotard showed that these Metanarratives still remain in Western society but are now being undermined by rapid Informatization and the commercialization of the University and its functions.

The *shift of authority* from the presence and intuition of knowers - from the good-faith of Reason to seek diverse knowledge integrated for human benefit or truth fidelity - to the automated database and the market had, in Lyotard's view, the power to unravel the very idea of 'justification' or 'legitimation' and, with it, the rationale for research altogether - especially in disciplines pertaining to human life, society and meaning.

We are now controlled not by binding extra-linguistic value paradigms defining notions of collective identity and ultimate purpose, but rather by our automatic responses to different species of 'language games'. In his vision of a solution to this situation, Lyotard opposes the assumptions of university, consensus, and generality that he identified within the thought of Humanistic, Neo-Kantian philosophers like Jurgen Habermas and he then proposed a continuation of experimentation and diversity to be assessed pragmatically in the context of language games rather than via appeal to a resurrected series of transcendentals and metaphysical unities.

- ■ The value-premises upholding academic research have been maintained by what Lyotard considers to be?

- ☐ Quasi-mythological beliefs about human purpose, human reason and human progress

Richard Rorty (1931-2007)

Rorty argues that contemporary sociological theory and analytic philosophy mistakenly imitates scientific methods. In addition, he denounces the traditional epistemological perspectives of

Representationalism and Correspondence theory that rely upon the independence of knowers and observers from phenomena and the passivity of natural phenomena in relation to consciousness.


Figure 15.7: Richard Rorty

Source: www.sites.uci.edu/ucisca/files/2010/08/Rorty-photo.jpg

As a proponent of anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism within a Pragmatic framework, he resonate postmodern strains of Conventionalism and Philosophical Relativism, but opposed much of postmodern thinking with his commitment to Social Liberalism.

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007)

Baudrillard introduced the notion that reality or the principle of the 'Real' is short-circuited by the interchangeability of signs in an era where communicative and semantic acts are dominated by electronic media and digital technologies. Baudrillard proposed that, in such a state, where subjects are detached from the outcomes of events (political, literary, artistic, personal, or otherwise), events no longer hold any particular sway on the subject nor have any identifiable context; they therefore have the effect of producing widespread indifference, detachment, and passivity in industrialized populations.

Thus, he claimed that a constant stream of appearances and references without any direct consequences to viewers or readers could eventually render the division between appearance and object indiscernible, resulting, ironically, in the 'disappearance' of mankind in what is, in effect, a virtual or holographic state, composed only of appearances.
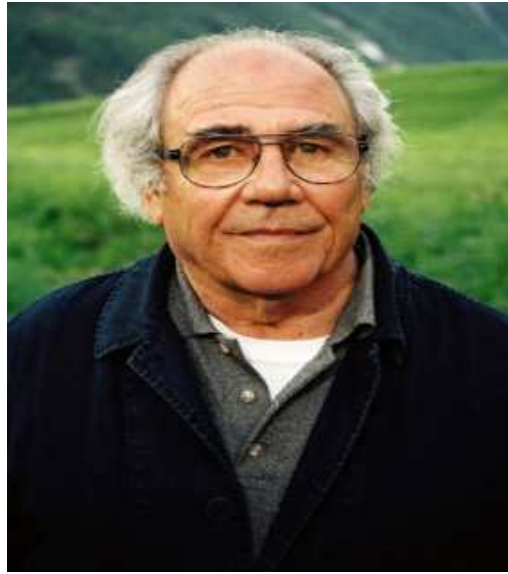
Figure 15.8: Jean Baudrillard

Source: www.artsandopinion.com/2003_v2_n5/volume_images/baudrillard-self.jpg

- Baudrillard proposed that, in such a state, where subjects are detached from the outcomes of events, what happen to events?

- ☐ Events no longer hold any particular sway on the subject nor have any identifiable context; they therefore have the effect of producing widespread indifference, detachment, and passivity in industrialized populations

Fredric Jameson (born 1934)

Jameson set forth one of the first expansive theoretical treatments of postmodernism by showing it as a historical period, intellectual trend and social phenomenon. Extensive in his methodology, Jameson has continued a sustained examination of the role that *periodization* continues to play as a grounding assumption of critical methodologies in Humanities disciplines.

Figure 15.9: Fredric Jameson

Source: www.versobooks.com/system/images/1032/original/Fredric-Jameson.jpg

He has contributed extensive effort to explicating the importance of concepts of *Utopianism* and Utopia as driving forces in the cultural and intellectual movements of Modernity, and outlining the political and existential uncertainties that may result from the decline or suspension of this trend in the theorized state of Postmodernity.

Douglas Kellner (born 1943)

In the work '*Analysis of the Journey*', Kellner insisted that the 'assumptions and procedures of modern theory' must be forgotten. He believed that what sits at the base of the definition of postmodernism are terms like advancement, innovation, and adaptation. Extensively, Kellner analyzed the terms of this theory in real life experiences and examples.

Kellner used science and technology studies as a major part of his analysis; he urged that the theory is incomplete without it. The believed that it is inappropriate to only focus on just postmodernism alone; instead, postmodernism must be interpreted through cultural studies where science and technology studies play a huge role.

Figure 15.10: Douglas Kellne

Kellner recognized that many theorists of postmodernism are trapped by their own cogitations. He finds strength in theorists like Baudrillard and his idea of Marxism. However, Kellner acknowledges Marxism's end and lack of importance to his theory.

In sum, criticisms of postmodernism are intellectually diverse; including the assertions that postmodernism is meaningless and promotes *obcurantism*. For example, Noam Chomsky has argued that postmodernism is meaningless because it adds nothing to analytical or empirical knowledge.

He asks why postmodernist intellectuals do not respond like people in other fields when asked, 'what are the principles of their theories, on what evidence are they based, what do they explain that was not already obvious, and so on?'...If answers cannot be given to these questions, then Chomsky cautioned that postmodernism should not be given serious attention.

- Kellner recognized that many theorists of postmodernism are trapped by their own cogitations. What does he find as his strength?
- ☐ He finds strength in theorists like Baudrillard and his idea of Marxism

Summary of Study Session 15

In Study Session 15, you have learnt that:

1. In the lecture, it was shown that society is now postmodern.
2. The lecture examined developments of postmodern social theory, its theoretical perspectives and theorists.
3. In recent years, most scholars believed that society is now postmodern.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 15

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 15.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 15.1)

After you have studied this study session, explain briefly the concept of metanarratives

SAQ 15.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 15.2)

1. According to Smart (1993) in Postmodern thinking, differentiate three postmodernist thinking or positions.

2. Mention any three Influential Postmodern thinkers

Study Session 16:   The Idea of Posthumanism

Introduction

At the base of much of Sociology, especially micro-Sociology, lies the idea of humanism. With recent developments in the discipline of Sociology, the idea of Posthumanism had emerged to constitute a profound challenge to Sociology.

This Study Session will focus on the idea of Posthumanism and how this can be harness to benefit sociological theory. You will learn the relevance of the idea of Posthumanism to sociological theory.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 16

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

16.1 Explain Posthumanism (SAQ 16.1)

16.2 Discuss Social Stratification and Posthumanism (SAQ 16.2)

16.3 Discuss Technology and Posthumanism (SAQ 16.3)

16.1   Posthumanism

In broad terms, Posthumanism has to do with the attitude on how to deal with the limitations of the human form. It is a vision of how to move beyond human limitations by the radical use of technological and other means. It is worthy to note that the present human form is believed to have room for change and improvement. This applies to both social systems and cultures, and even organs of the human body.

For instance, there is no reason why our average life-span should be around fifty to seventy years and not 300 or more years. The idea of Posthumanism entrenched the fact that there is no compelling reason to accept things as they are. This can be applied to hearing, physical strength,

speed, intelligence, and many other aspects of human existence. In essence, this very human desire to improve is the main element of the idea of Posthumanism.
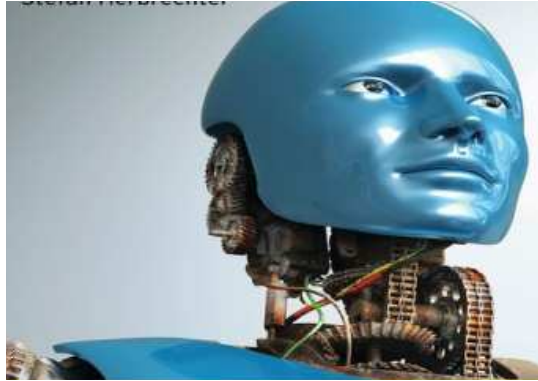
Figure 16.1: Posthumanism (Critical Analysis)

Source: www.media.bloomsbury.com/rep/bj/9781780936062.jpg

Box 16.1. The idea of Posthumanism entrenched the fact that there is no compelling reason to accept things as they are

This can be applied to:

- Hearing,
- Physical strength,
- Speed,
- Intelligence and many other aspects of human existence.

■ After you have studied Posthumanism, The idea of Posthumanism entrenched the fact that there is no compelling reason to accept things as they are. This can be applied to _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____

☐ The idea of Posthumanism can be applied to hearing, physical strength, speed, intelligence, and many other aspects of human existence.

16.2   Social Stratification and Posthumanism

The idea of Posthumanism recognizes the diversities inherent in human societies. This includes the diversity of goals and means of reaching them. This form of diversity is largely responsible for our complex social and economic systems. In Posthumanism this diversity is very important,

hence the notion '*moving in clades*' is another vital string in the understanding of the idea of Posthumanism.

A clade here represents a biological family of species having a common ancestor. Birds, as a group, are a good example. Birds all share a common origin and all modern birds descended from this single beginning. All their diversity springs from evolutionary changes from this common origin. Clades, in this way, mean the unity of origin and the diversity of descent. The notion emphasizes that while we come from common origins we will move on differing paths, toward differing goals.

This notion of *moving in clades* also implies that this diversity does not rule out cooperation among the different life forms. Our current societies are proof that many different individuals, with differing languages, cultures, ideologies, religions, temperaments, and backgrounds, can get along and cooperate. This is the basis of trade. Another is Earth's total ecosystem. According to current biological theories, all life originated from one common ancestor. Even with the so called 'struggle to survive' there is still much cooperation, mostly in a non-conscious way, among the various life forms.

Figure 16.2: Social Stratification

Source:

www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/83/Amish_vs_modern_transportation.jpg

■ Look again at the Social Stratification and Posthumanism, the idea of Posthumanism recognizes the diversities inherent in human societies which includes _____, and _____

□ The diversity of goals and means of reaching them.

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16.3   Technology and Posthumanism

Another vital element of Posthumanism is techno-transcendence. This simply means using technology to overcome human limitations, to transcend. To Posthumanism, the problem of increasing intelligence in humans for example can be tackled from different angles. One is to use chemicals to stimulate already existing processes in the brain.

Some drugs have already shown a positive effect on memory e.g., vasopressin. Thus, these and other drugs can be experimented and improved upon. Thus, chemicals can be used to boost memory, an important component of intelligence. Another solution is to implant new brain tissue. Innovations like these might make rewiring the brain a possibility.

Already, many experimental findings point out that the structure and plasticity of the brain might be related to the functioning of the mind. The third possibility is to wire the brain directly into computers. This involves putting the mind into a machine, the machine being a computer designed for this purpose.

Figure 16.3: Technology and Posthumanism

Source: www.drstevebest.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/face.jpg%3Fw%3D640

- To Posthumanism, the problem of increasing intelligence in humans for example can be tackled from different angles. Write one different angle you know
- ☐ Possibility of wire the brain directly into computers. This involves putting the mind into a machine, the machine being a computer designed for this purpose.

Summary of Study Session 16

In Study Session 16, you have learnt that:

1. The concept of Posthumanism was discussed as an attitude that deals with the limitations of the human form.
2. It was shown to be a vision of how to move beyond human limitations by the radical use of technological and other means.
3. The lecture stressed that it is worthy to note that the present human form have room for change and improvement.
4. This applies to both social systems and cultures, and even organs of the human body.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 16

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 16.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 16.1)

Briefly explain the term Posthumanism

SAQ 16.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 16.2)

A clade in this Study Session represents a biological family of species having a common ancestor. Give one example and explain

SAQ 16.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 16.3)

Techno-transcendence is another vital element of Posthumanism, briefly discuss

Study Session 17   Actor-Network Theory

Introduction

The actor-network theory (ANT) is a recent theory, although most scholars believed it is more of a method than theory, has its roots in structuralism and poststructuralism. Structuralism involves a focus on structures, though these are not really the same structures of concern to structural functionalists. The primary concern to structuralists is *linguistic structures.*

This Study Session will discuss what the actor-network theory is all about. You will also learn the relevance of the actor-network theory.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 17

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:
17.1 Discuss Actor–Network Theory (SAQ 17.1)

17.1   Actor–Network Theory

This is often abbreviated as **ANT.** This is an approach to social theory and research that treats objects as part of social networks. Although it is best known for its controversial insistence on the capacity of nonhumans to act and participate in systems and networks, ANT is also associated with forceful critiques of conventional and critical sociological theory and the discipline of Sociology in general.

ANT was developed by scholars like Michel Callon and Bruno Latour, John Law and other scholars. The theory is most often regarded as a 'material-semiotic' method. This means that it maps relations that are simultaneously material, that is relationships between things; and semiotic relations, that is relationships between concepts.

Figure 17.1: Michel Callon and Bruno Latour

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

ANT assumes that many relations are both material and semiotic. Although it is called a 'theory', ANT does not usually explain 'why' or 'how' a network occurs or takes the form that it does. Rather, ANT is a way of thoroughly exploring the relational ties within a network. The most central concept in ANT is the actor-network. The term 'network' is believed to be somewhat problematic in that according to Latour have a lot of unwanted connotations.

**Box 17.1. Latour Unwanted Connotations.**

Firstly, it implies that what is described takes the shape of a network, which is not necessarily the case.

Secondly, it implies 'transportation without deformation', which, in ANT, is not possible since any actor-network involves a vast number of translations.

Latour, however still contends that network is a fitting term to use, because "it has no a priori order relation; it is not tied to the axiological myth of a top and of a bottom of society; it makes absolutely no assumption whether a specific locus is macro- or micro- and does not modify the tools to study the element 'a' or the element 'b'".

Actor–network theory tries to explain how material–semiotic networks come together to act as a whole; the clusters of actors involved in creating meaning are both material and semiotic. As a part of this it may look at explicit strategies for relating different elements together into a

network so that they form an apparently coherent whole. These networks are potentially transient, existing in a constant making and re-making.
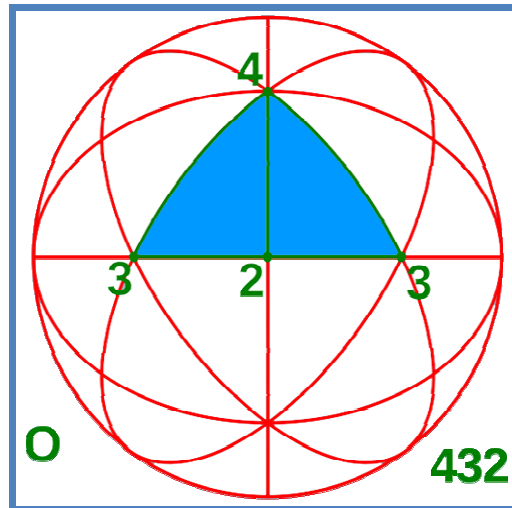
Figure 17.2: Symmetry System

**Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan**

This means that relations need to be repeatedly "performed" or the network will dissolve. They also assume that networks of relations are not intrinsically coherent, and may indeed contain conflicts. Thus, social relations, in other words, are only ever in process, and must be performed continuously. ANT is often associated with the equal treatment of human and non-human actors. ANT assumes that all entities in a network can and should be described in the same terms. This is called the principle of *generalized symmetry*. The rationale for this is that differences between them are generated in the network of relations, and should not be presupposed.

The distinction between intermediaries and mediators is key to ANT. Intermediaries are entities which make no difference, to some interesting state of affairs which we are studying; and so can be ignored. They transport the force of some other entity more or less without transformation and so are fairly uninteresting. Mediators are entities which multiply difference and so should be the object of study. Their outputs cannot be predicted by their inputs. From an ANT point of view sociological theory has tended to treat too much of the world as intermediaries.

ANT has been criticized as amoral. Again, ANT had been criticized for moving beyond deterministic models that trace organizational phenomena back to powerful individuals, social structures, hegemonic discourses or technological effects.

Instead, ANT prefers to seek out complex patterns of causality rooted in connections between actors." They argue that ANT's ontological realism makes it, "less well equipped for pursuing a critical account of organizations that is, one which recognises the unfolding nature of reality, considers the limits of knowledge and seeks to challenge structures of domination." This implies that ANT does not account for pre-existing structures, such as power, but rather sees these structures as emerging from the actions of actors within the network and their ability to align in pursuit of their interests.

Some critics have argued that research based on ANT perspectives remains entirely descriptive and fails to provide explanations for social processes. ANT - like comparable social scientific methods - requires judgement calls from the researcher as to which actors are important within a network and which are not. Critics argue that the importance of particular actors cannot be determined in the absence of "out-of-network" criteria. Similarly, others argue that actor-networks risk degenerating into endless chains of association.
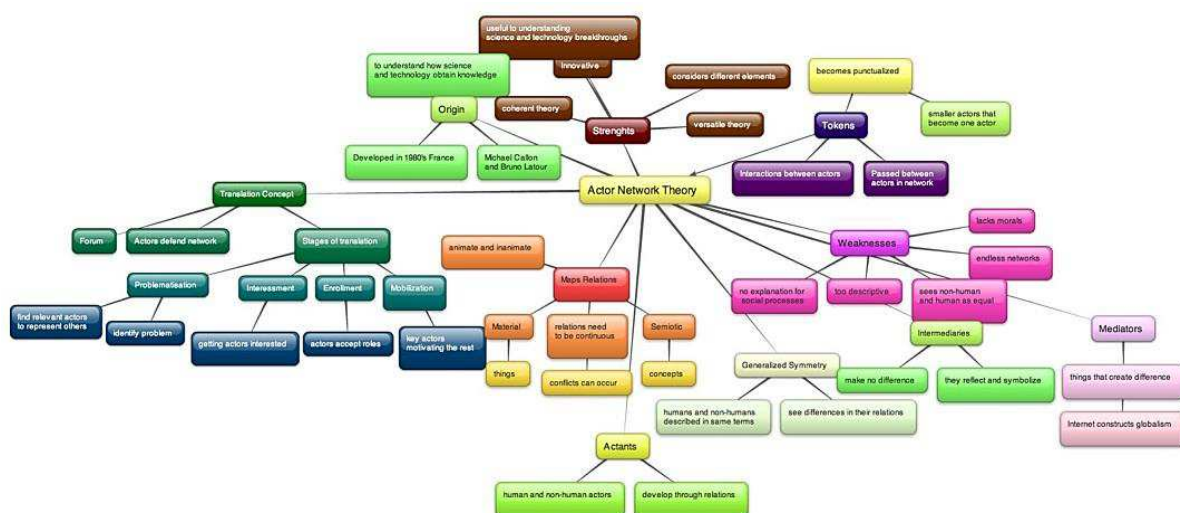
Figure 17.1: Actor–Network Theory

Source:

www.lh4.googleusercontent.com/SDqDD185ADY/TYSxx7D4A5I/AAAAAAAAAAQ/uLIxBGwAbjc/s1600/ssyjese_ANT-mindmap.jpg

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- Now that you have studied Actor–Network Theory, in your own perspective describe Actor–Network Theory

- ☐ **Actor-Network Theory ANT** is an approach to social theory and research that treats objects as part of social networks. Although it is best known for its controversial insistence on the capacity of nonhumans to act and participate in systems and networks.

Summary of Study Session 17

In Study Session 17, you have learnt that:

1. The actor-network theory (ANT) was discussed in this lecture.
2. It was shown that this theory is rooted in structuralism and poststructuralism. Structuralism here involves a focus on structures, though these are not really the same structures of concern to structural functionalists.
3. The primary concern to structuralists is *linguistic structures.*
4. Intermediaries are entities which make no difference, to some interesting state of affairs which we are studying; and so can be ignored.
5. They transport the force of some other entity more or less without transformation and so are fairly uninteresting.
6. Mediators are entities which multiply difference and so should be the object of study.
7. Their outputs cannot be predicted by their inputs. From an ANT point of view sociological theory has tended to treat too much of the world as intermediaries.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 17

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 17.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 17.1)
According to this study, describe mediators' concept and their output

Study Session 18   Practice Theory

Introduction

Practice theory is considered as one of the variety of 'cultural theories'. The concept of practice is generally conceived here as a routinized way of acting, especially how we manage our bodies, handle objects, treat subjects, describe things, and understand the world.

Discussing and clarifying the abstract nature of practice and practice theory by focusing on its relationship to a number of important concepts such as the body, the mind, things, knowledge, language/discourse, structure/process, and agent/individual.

This Study Session will focus on Practice Theory. You will also learn the Concept of Practice, and Important Concepts in Practice Theory

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 18

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

18.1 Explain the Concept of Practice (SAQ 18.1)

18.2 Discuss Concept of Practice Theory Important (SAQ 18.2)

18.1   The Concept of Practice

The concept of practice emphasizes the impact of 'taken-for-granted, pre-theoretical assumptions on human conduct'. Practice theory is said to be derived from bits and pieces of the work of a variety of theorists and also from a variety of theories. It constitutes a loose network of works and ideas, even though there is no grand practice theory yet.

Figure 18.1: The Performance of the Body

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

A practice can be said to mean the regular, skillful performance of human bodies. Practices are the result of training the body in a particular way. But there are enough distinctive theoretical ideas that cohere in interesting fashion around the idea of practice.

In other words, practice theory is a theory of how social beings, with their diverse motives and their diverse intentions, make and transform the world they live. It is dialectic between structure and human action working in a dynamic form. Practice theory therefore seeks to explain the relationships that are obtained in human action. This approach seeks to resolve the dissonance between traditional structuralist approaches and approaches which attempted to explain social phenomena in terms of individual actions.

Practice theory is strongly associated with the French theorist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. His concept of *habitus* represents an important formulation of the principles of practice theory. Bourdieu developed the notion of 'habitus' to capture 'the permanent internalisation of the social order in the human body'. His work, '*Outline of a Theory of Practice*', which is based on his work in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence is an example of Bourdieu's formulation of practice theory applied to empirical data gathered through ethnography.

■ If you check the concept of practice, you will see the concept of practice emphasizes. Kindly describe the impact

☐ The concept of practice emphasizes the impact of 'taken-for-granted, pre-theoretical assumptions on human conduct'

18.2   Concepts in Practice Theory Important

Reckwitz had attempted to clarify the abstract nature of practice and practice theory by focusing on its relationship to a number of these important concepts:
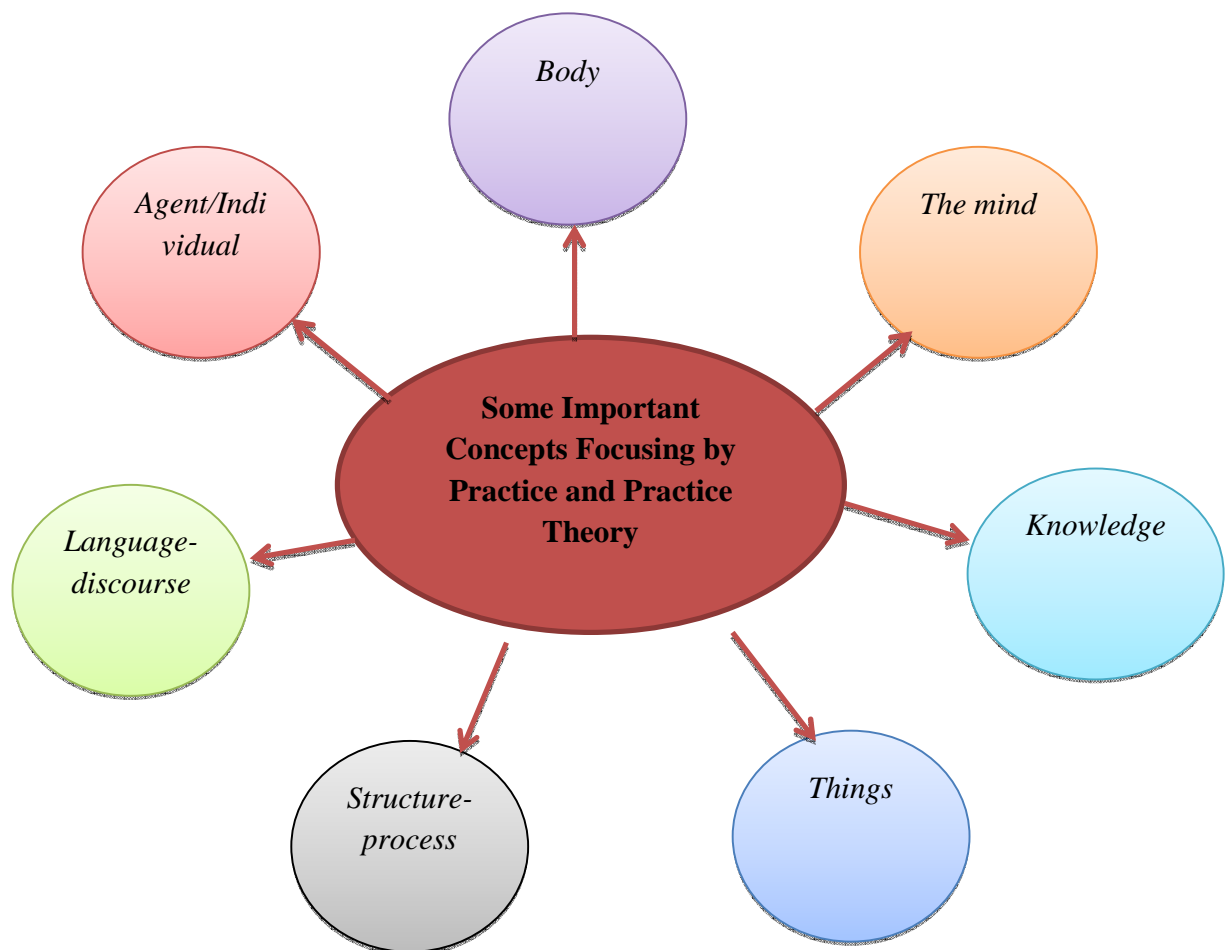
Figure 18.2: Important Concepts Focusing by Practice and Practice Theory
Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

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The mind: Practice involves not only routinized bodily performances but also the mind, that is, it involves mental activities. To engage in practice entails the use of the body in various ways and also engagement in mental activities. Playing tennis for example requires both routinized bodily and mental activities, as well as the interaction of the two.

To other theorists, the human body is affected and even controlled by other phenomena such as norms, rational choices, and values. But for practice theory, the body is of central and direct importance, as it is at the realm of the social. According to Reckwitz (2002), practices are in fact, 'routinized bodily performances. Accordingly, this conception of practice applies to obvious things like using a racket to play tennis; it also involves performances like talking, reading, and writing.

Knowledge: This is also required for practice to take place. This knowledge specifically involves understanding how things are linked with each other within a practice. The knowledge here in most cases is employed routinely without thinking through all of the issues involved.

Things: Things are integral to practice and they are as important as bodily and mental activities. Practices always involve the use of things in particular ways. The use of things usually involves both bodily movements and mental activities. Generally, practice cannot occur in the absence of objects. It is the interaction of the body; mind and things (objects) that most practice exist.

Structure-Process: The concept of social structure is imbedded in the routine nature of practice. Thus, structure, as well as process, does not exist 'out there' in large-scale social phenomena, but this exists in the routine nature of action.

Language-Discourse: Language or discourse in practice theory does not only involve signs, but it involves other key concerns of the theory. Language includes forms of understanding, know-how and motivation that are linked with each other.

Agent/Individual: In practice theory, the focus is on practice and not on agents. The theory recognize that agents exist, but these agents are known as merely 'body-minds' who carry out

social practices. Thus, the agent is not autonomous, as argued in rational choice theory, or the agent a judgmental dope, as in structural functionalism; instead, the agent is one who understands the world, one who uses know-how and motivational knowledge according to the particular practice.

■ After you have studied the important concepts in practice theory, briefly explain the structure-process

☐ Structure process is the concept of social structure imbedded in the routine nature of practice. Thus, structure, as well as process, does not exist 'out there' in large-scale social phenomena, but this exists in the routine nature of action.

Summary of Study Session 18

In Study Session 18, you have learnt that:

1. Practice theory was look at in this lecture as one of the variety of 'cultural theories'.
2. The concept of practice was defined as a routinized way of acting, especially how we manage our bodies, handle objects, treat subjects, describe things, and understand the world
3. The concept of practice emphasizes the impact of 'taken-for-granted, pre-theoretical assumptions on human conduct'
4. A practice can be said to mean the regular, skillful performance of human bodies. Practices are the result of training the body in a particular way
5. *The mind:* Practice involves not only routinized bodily performances but also the mind, that is, it involves mental activities.
6. *Knowledge:* This is also required for practice to take place. This knowledge specifically involves understanding how things are linked with each other within a practice.
7. *Things:* Things are integral to practice and they are as important as bodily and mental activities.
8. *Structure-process:* The concept of social structure is imbedded in the routine nature of practice.

9. *Language-discourse:* Language or discourse in practice theory does not only involve signs, but it involves other key concerns of the theory.

10. *Agent/Individual:* In practice theory, the focus is on practice and not on agents.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 18

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 18.1 (tests Learning Outcome 18.1)

_____is said to be derived from bits and pieces of the work of a variety of theorists and also from a variety of theories. It constitutes a loose network of works and ideas, even though there is no grand practice theory yet.

SAQ 18.2 (tests Learning Outcome 18.2)

There are seven important concepts focusing by practice and practice theory, mention and explain three

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 1

SAQ 1.1

Georg Simmel's Sociology shows that the difference of the social interaction in small-scale communities with that which occur in cities and towns.

SAQ 1.2

According to Kenneth Allan, sociological theory and social theory focuses on commentary and critique of modern society rather than explanation of what is happening in modern society

SAQ 1.3

The **first question** has to do with what the sociologists wants to study (for instance crime, poverty, unemployment, and so on); and the **second question** has to do with how the facts of this study will be.

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 2

SAQ 2.1

Kingsley Davies argued that they may clearly resort to fraud or force

SAQ 2.2

It is the problem of how to treat the non-rational unit acts at the base of a sociological model

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 3

SAQ 3.1

Symbolic Interactionism Theory: This is a sociological theory that places emphasis on micro-scale social interaction to provide subjective meaning in human behavior and the social process. The theoretical approach analyses society as a product of the everyday interactions of individuals. It views society as nothing more than the shared reality that people construct as they interact with one another.

Structural Functionalism Theory: This theory is also well known as Functionalism. This theory sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. The theory provides a macro-level orientation of society, focusing on the social structures that shape society as a whole.

SAQ 3.2

Feminism is the theory that focuses on how gender inequality shapes social life. This theoretical approach shows how sexuality both reflects patterns of social inequality and helps to perpetuate them. Feminism, from a social conflict perspective, focuses on gender inequality and links sexuality to the domination of women by men.

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 4

SAQ 4.1

1   The city or town-dweller

2   The mobile, nomadic societies

SAQ 4.2

Enlightenment is generally described as a period when modernity sprung up, with the emergence of the world economy and exchange among diverse societies, bringing sweeping changes and new challenges for society

SAQ 4.3

During the Enlightenment period, European societies were still largely rural, with minimal involvement of the government in the everyday life of the citizens

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 5

SAQ 5.1

- The rise of factory-based industrial economy,
- The explosive growth of cities, and
- The spread of new ideas about democracy and political rights

SAQ 5.2

In order to become part of the anonymous crowd of the city's labour force

SAQ 5.3

- Overpopulation and homelessness
- Migrant workers faced crime and pollution in cities
- Migrant workers evolved a new social world with its own set of problems

SAQ 5.4

Question the validity of this traditional view about the power structure in society

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 6

SAQ 6.1

- Of types of social order,
- Of types of social units, and
- Of the material conditions of human life

SAQ 6.2

Fetishism stage was regarded as the primary stage of the theological stage of thinking. In this stage, it is commonly believed that inanimate objects have living spirit; thus, people worship and venerate these objects like trees, rivers, mountains, stones, and so on

SAQ 6.3

The Metaphysical stage

SAQ 6.4

Mathematics; Astronomy; Physics; Chemistry; Biology; Psychology; Sociology

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 7

SAQ 7.1

That human relation would become "thingified." Comte stated an instance during the eleventh century where a Pope, Pope Hildebrand, had for a brief moment extended his spiritual power over all temporal power, so the High Priest of Humanity, armed with a scientific knowledge; would as the Pope of humanity institute a reign of harmony, justice, rectitude, and equity

SAQ 7.2

By their relative positions in regard to the means of production, that is, by their differential access to scarce resources and scarce power

SAQ 7.3

Humans are inherently egoistic, but norms, beliefs and values (collective consciousness) form the moral basis of society, which also brings about social integration in society

SAQ 7.4

The death of a leader effectively ends the power of that authority. On the other hand, it is only through a rationalized and bureaucratic form that this authority be passed on.

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 8

SAQ 8.1

Agency is defined as the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices; whilst structure refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available to individuals in society.

SAQ 8.2

Structure influences human behaviour, and humans are capable of changing the social structures they inhabit

SAQ 8.3

He proposed that individuals are best conceptualized as participants in social practices (social structures); and that these participants have the capability to either reproduce or change these social practices

SAQ 8.4

A field here represents an evolving set of roles and relationships in a social domain, where various forms of 'capital' such as prestige or financial resources are at stake

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 9

SAQ 9.1

There have been the spread and mixture of philosophy, religion, language, the arts, and other aspects of culture

SAQ 9.2

Anthony Giddens in his work, *"The Consequences of Modernity";* defined globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa

SAQ 9.3

Cultural Globalization entails the intensification and stretching of economic interrelations around the globe. It involves issues as the emergence of a new global economic order, the internationalization of trade and finance, the changing power of transnational corporations, and the enhancement of the role of international economic institutions like the IMF and World Bank.

SAQ 9.4

The precariousness of life in self and other

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 10

SAQ 10.1

The reflective study of the discipline of Sociology by sociologists

SAQ 10.2

This variety of metatheorizing according to Ritzer involves the study of sociological theory in order to produce a better, more profound understanding of extant theory. Under this category, theorists are concerned with the study of other theorists and their theories, and other community of theorists, as well as the larger intellectual and social contexts of theories and theorists.

SAQ 10.3

Still following the micro-macro typology, it can be said that at each end of the micro-macro continuum, and virtually everywhere in between, one can differentiate between objective and subjective components

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 11

SAQ 11.1

Feminist theory can be defined as a generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centred point of view

SAQ 11.2

This period is said to occur between 1960-1990. It is a period where women worked to translate their basic political rights into economic and social equality and to re-conceptualize relations between men and women with the concept and notion of '*gender'*.

SAQ 11.3

Living and acting within a complex field of power that they are determined by and that in their agency they both reproduced and contest

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 12

SAQ 12.1

Meaning that what we have often taken as universal and absolute knowledge of the world is in fact, knowledge derived from the experiences of a powerful section of society, which portrays men as 'masters'

SAQ 12.2

The commitment here lies on how feminist believe their work will help to improve the daily lives of the people they study

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 13

SAQ 13.1

Martineau introduced feminist sociological perspectives in her writing on otherwise overlooked issues such as marriage, children, domestic and religious life, and race relations

SAQ 13.2

Since the mid-1940s, Jessie's focus was to increase understanding of the effects of sexism on women's experience of marriage, parenting, education and economic life

SAQ 13.3

Fiction, Poetry, Music and Oral History

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 14

SAQ 14.1

1. Feminists believe that women are oppressed simple due to their sexuality and due the dominant ideology of patriarchy

2. Patriarchy is the system which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions.

SAQ 14.2

1. Radical feminists believe that society must be changed at its core in order to dissolve patriarchy, not just through acts of legislation.

2. The groups include radical-libertarian feminism and radical-cultural feminism

SAQ 14.3

1. Liberal feminists

2. The main view of liberal feminists is that all people are created equal by God and deserve equal rights.

SAQ 14.4

1. Socialist feminists reject the idea that biology predetermines ones gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both the public and private spheres. Socialist feminists also challenge ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy.

2. class and gender.

SAQ 14.5

1. Theorists

2. fundamental and biological differences

SAQ 14.6

Eco-feminists believe that patriarchy and male domination is harmful to women, as well as the physical environment and ecosystem.

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 15

SAQ 15.1

Whilst many sociologists, and some sociological theories continue to undermine postmodern social theory; however, the fact remains that postmodern social theory can no longer be ignored.

SAQ 15.2

1. According to Smart (1993), the first, extreme position holds that there has been a radical rupture in society; thus, modern society has been replaced by a postmodern society. Proponents of this point of view include scholars like Jean Baudrillard (Armitage, 2005); Genosko, etc.

The second position of postmodern thinking is that although a change has taken place, postmodernism has grown out and is continuing with modernism. Adherents of this position include Marxian thinkers like Fredric Jameson, Ernesto Laclau and other postmodern feminists such as Nancy Fraser.

Finally, there is the position adopted by Smart himself, who, rather than viewing modernism and postmodernism as epochs, this position advocates that both modernism and postmodernism should be viewed as being engaged in a long-running and on-going set of relationships, with postmodernism continually pointing out the limitation of postmodernism. Though useful, Smart's typology had been severally criticized by most postmodernists as they argued that this typology has simplified and greatly diversified their ideas and distorting their ideas in the process.

2. Douglas Kellner (born 1943), Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), Richard Rorty (1931-2007)

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 16

SAQ 16.1

Posthumanism has to do with the attitude on how to deal with the limitations of the human form. It is a vision of how to move beyond human limitations by the radical use of technological and other means.

SAQ 16.2

Birds, as a group, are a good example. Birds all share a common origin and all modern birds descended from this single beginning. All their diversity springs from evolutionary changes from this common origin.

SAQ 16.3

This simply means using technology to overcome human limitations, to transcend.

To Posthumanism, the problem of increasing intelligence in humans for example can be tackled from different angles. One is to use chemicals to stimulate already existing processes in the brain. Some drugs have already shown a positive effect on memory e.g., vasopressin.

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 17

SAQ 17.1

Mediators are entities which multiply difference and so should be the object of study. Their outputs cannot be predicted by their inputs.

Notes on SAQs for Study Session 18

SAQ 18.1

Practice theory

SAQ 18.2

  i. *The mind:* Practice involves not only routinized bodily performances but also the mind, that is, it involves mental activities. To engage in practice entails the use of the body in various ways and also engagement in mental activities. Playing tennis for example requires both routinized bodily and mental activities, as well as the interaction of the two.

ii. *Knowledge:* This is also required for practice to take place. This knowledge specifically involves understanding how things are linked with each other within a practice. The knowledge here in most cases is employed routinely without thinking through all of the issues involved.

iii. *Things:* Things are integral to practice and they are as important as bodily and mental activities. Practices always involve the use of things in particular ways. The use of things usually involves both bodily movements and mental activities. Generally, practice cannot occur in the absence of objects. It is the interaction of the body; mind and things (objects) that most practice exist.

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