



**EDO UNIVERSITY IYAMHO,  
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Faculty of Arts, Management and Social Sciences

Department of Sociology

**COURSE TITLE & CODE**

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (SOC 111)

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## \* **Misconceptions about Sociology**

Three misconceptions which people do have about Sociology:

1. **Sociology is not socialism:**
2. **Sociology is not social work:**
3. **Sociology is not Social Engineering:**

## **Origin of sociology**

- Derived from both Latin and Greek origins.
- The Latin word: “**socius,**” *means* “**companion**”;
- The suffix –“**logy,**” means “**the study of**” from Greek, *lógos*, means “word”, “**knowledge**”.
- Study of human associations or society.”
- It was **first coined** in 1780 **Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyes (1748–1836)** in an unpublished manuscript.
- **August Comte was popularly known to have coined the word Sociology**
- Comte used this term to describe a new way of looking at society.
- Comte had earlier used the term “**social physics**”
- Comte endeavoured to unify history, psychology and economics through the scientific understanding of the social realm.

## **Definition of Sociology**

- **Sociology is like every other social science but** its approach, assumptions and methods are to some extent different from others.

- Sociology is the systematic **study of the groups/individuals** and **societies** in which people live, how social structures and cultures are created and maintained or changed, and how they affect our behaviour.
- **Isbset (1970) studies the social bond**, it investigates the forces that enable human beings to stick together in the social molecule in which they are found from the very moment of their conception.
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- **Scientific study of human social behaviour analysis & nature of the structure and function of the society.**
- The fundamental **objective of sociology** as a field of enquiry is to understand & explain the existence of human being.
- **Wright Randall (1975)** defined sociology as the study of the relationships existing between people
- **Ritzer, Kammeyer and Yetman (1979)** According to them, sociology is the study of individuals in a social setting that includes groups, organizations, culture and societies and of the inter-relationship of individual.

**Ogionwo and Otite (1981)** sociology studies man and the **consequences of his being a member of society.**

-Sociology is especially interested in human interaction, behaviour or social action in human groups.

- **Wilmot (1985)** science of human companionship, fellowship, association and **interaction**. Ways in which **human beings interact with one another.**
- **Ekong (1988)** scientific study of human society and social behaviour, he focuses on concept and **patterns of an organization and conduct which are recurrent in the society.**
- **Anthony Giddens (2013)** sees sociology as the study of human social life, groups and society having as its subject matter our own behaviour as social beings.

## **Microsociology and Macrosociology**

### **Microsociology**

- We observe what happens as **people interact on a face-to-face basis**.
- “Small scale analysis”, “microscope”.
- It studies what people say, do, and think moment by moment in their daily lives.
- Microsociology deals with everyday life: **e.g.** conversation in a bus, bridal party or **baby shower**, a routine **encounter between pupils and teacher in a specific classroom**.

### **Macrosociology**

- **Study social groups and societies.**
- “Large scale analysis”. Long-term social processes of organizations, institutions including the state, social class, the family, the economy, culture and society.
- Changes in the structure of a religious sect, the impact of population dynamics and computer technologies on the work force, shifts in the racial and ethnic composition of a city, or the dynamics of intergroup rivalries.

## **Sociology and other Social Science Disciplines**

- All branches of science attempt to discover general truths, propositions, or laws through methods based on observation and experimentation.
- Science is often divided into two categories: Social sciences and Natural sciences.
- The word *natural* must be applied to these sciences with caution, however.

- The **social sciences** are just as natural as those that the natural sciences embrace.
  - e.g. Collection of a football team action. Electricity & magnetism
  - Each social science focuses on selected aspects of social relationships or social systems.
  - **Economics** is the study of how goods, services, and wealth are produced, consumed, and distributed within societies. supply and demand
  - **Political science** studies power, governments, and political processes.
- Electioneering and Governance**
- **Anthropology**, study of the nature, origin and development of mankind.
  - **Psychology** is concerned **individual** human behavior, development, behavior disorders, perception, emotion, personality, and mental behavioral processes.
  - **Geography**, is concerned with the physical environment, distribution of plants and animals & human. Physical landscape.
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### **The founding fathers of Sociology**

- *Auguste Comte*
- Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was born in southern France.
- **Law of human progress, all human intellectual development, passes successively through three different theoretical conditions:**
- (1) the theological, or fictitious;
- (2) the metaphysical, or abstract; and
- (3) the scientific, or positive.
- In the first stage, the theological, **everything is explained and understood through the supernatural.**

- In the second stage, the metaphysical, abstract forces are assumed to be the source of explanation and understanding. **the political dominance is held by the clergy and lawyers.**
- In the third and highest stage, the scientific, **the laws of the universe are studied through observation, experimentation, and comparison.**
- **The concept of social statics, and social dynamics** by Comte

- ***Herbert Spencer***

- Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) was born in England, the son of a school teacher.
- Evolutionary process similar to that of Charles Darwin
- It was Spencer who coined the phrase “**survival of the fittest / Natural Selection** or **“laissez-faire”**”

He believe the state should not interrupt the evolutionary process

- His work on problems of **objectivity** in social sciences

- ***Karl Marx***

- Karl Marx (1818–1883) was born in Germany.
- He believed that **social conflict**—struggle and strife—was at the core of society, the source of all social change
- He asserted that all history was marked by **economic determinism**—the idea that all change, social conditions, and even society itself are based on economic factors and that economic inequality results in class struggles between the **bourgeoisie** (the owners and rulers) and the **proletariat** (the industrial workers).
- The recognition among workers **class consciousness**, which, according to Marx, leads ultimately to **REVOLUTION.**

- ***Emile Durkheim***

- Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) can be considered the first French academic sociologist.
- He focus his sociological eye on the question of how societies hold together and endure:
- He believe we should focus on the Group
- Durkheim wrote on:
- *The Division of Labor in Society*,
- *The Rules of Sociological Method*,
- *Suicide: Egoistic, Fatalistic, Anomic and Altruistic* and
- *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

- ***Max Weber***

- Max Weber (1864–1920) was born in Germany, the son of a wealthy German politician.
- His best-known works in sociology include *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
- In Weber's work, however, the *subjective* meanings (the personal beliefs, feelings, and perceptions) that humans attach to their interactions with other humans played a much greater role.
- Sociologists should study social action
- **Verstehen**: understanding human action by examining the subjective meanings that people attach to their own behavior and to the behavior of others
- Objectivity: Value-free Sociology
- Bureaucracy

## DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE

- Edward B. Tylor (1871) views culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.
- Linton (1940) defines culture as the sum total of knowledge, attitudes and habitual behaviour patterns shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society.
- Herskovites (1955) simply defines culture as the man-made part of the environment.
- Kroeber (1948) defines culture as the mass of learned and transmitted motives, reactions, habits, techniques, ideas and values and the behaviour they induce.

### *Elements of Culture*

- *Symbols*
- The existence of culture depends on people's ability to create and understand symbols. A **symbol** is something, Words, numbers, flags, crosses, and kisses are symbols. In the same way, a stop sign is a symbol meaning "halt" and a cross is a symbol of g that is used to represent something else. Christianity.
- Only humans can assign symbols to represent the objects around them, which is one of the things that makes humans different from animals and enables us to create cultures. The difference is not one of degree. It is not that humans have better reasoning ability than animals. Rather, it is a fundamental difference in kind. Most sociologists assume that the ability to use symbols is uniquely human and that animals do not communicate symbolically or deal with abstractions.

- ***Language***

- The most important set of symbols is **language**. Language, among humans, is the systematized usage of speech and hearing to convey or express feelings and ideas. It is through language that our ideas, values, beliefs, and knowledge are transmitted, expressed, and shared. Other media, such as music, art, and dance, are also important means of communication; but language is uniquely flexible and precise.
- **Values** are ideas shared by the people in a society regarding what is important and worthwhile. Our values are the basis of our judgments about what is desirable, beautiful, correct, and good, as well as what are undesirable, ugly, incorrect, and bad. Most values have both positive and negative counterparts, which are reciprocally related. If you place a high positive value on fighting for your country, for example, you probably place a high negative value on those who refuse to fight.

- ***Norms***

- Social **norms**, another element of culture, are rules of conduct or social expectations for behavior. These rules and social expectations specify how people should and should not behave in various social situations.
- Whereas values are abstract conceptions of what is important and worthwhile, social norms are standards, rules, guides, and expectations for actual behavior.
- Norms and values are likely to be conceptually consistent, but values are less situation-bound and are more general and abstract. Norms link values with actual events. Most norms permit a range of behaviors; that is, some kinds or degrees of over-conformity and under-conformity are expected and tolerated, particularly in some settings or situations. We would not criticize a starving man for lying to get food, for example.
- An early American sociologist, William G. Sumner (1840–1910), identified two **types of norms**, which he labeled “**folkways**” and “**mores**.”

- **Folkways** are customs or conventions. They are norms, in that they provide rules for conduct, but violations of folkways bring only mild censure. E.g. If you eat vegetables with a spoon or attend class in a gown or bathing suit, the chances are you will not be arrested or beaten, but you may receive some smiles, glances, or occasional comments from others.
- **Mores** are considered more important than folkways, and reactions to their violation are more serious. They are more likely than folkways to involve clear-cut distinctions between right and wrong, and they are more closely associated with the values a society considers important.
- Violations of mores inspire intense reactions, and some type of punishment inevitably follows. The punishment may involve expulsion from the group, harsh ridicule, imprisonment, or in some cases even death.
- Why don't physicians end the life of elderly people who have terminal illnesses? Why don't people betray their country's well-being for money? Actions such as these violate cultural mores.
- Mores that prohibit something are **taboos**. To love and care for one's children is a *mos* (the Latin singular of *mores*); to commit incest (marry or have intercourse) with them or neglect them is a taboo.
- Certain norms that a society feels strongly about may become **laws**, which are formal, standardized expressions of norms enacted by legislative bodies to regulate particular types of behaviors.
- Laws do not merely state what behaviors are not permitted; they also state the punishment for violating the law. Ideally, the punishment should reflect the seriousness of the crime or civil offense and should be carried out by a judicial system.
- ***Cultural Lag***
- Ogburn (1950) wrote that when changes in technology and material culture (material culture consist of things created by human e.g. building, clothing and tools) come more rapidly than changes in nonmaterial culture

(nonmaterial aspects of culture—symbols, language, values, norms, and laws), we have a phenomenon known as **cultural lag**.

- Since Ogburn wrote this, it has been recognized that cultural lag occurs not only when material aspects of culture change more rapidly than nonmaterial aspects, but also when two or more aspects of the culture change at different rates.
- The public acceptance of clean air, for example, has outpaced our governmental interest in forcing companies to eliminate the pouring of pollutants into the air. The desire for the elimination of cancer and AIDS outpaces our cures for them.

## INTERPRETING CULTURE: OUR OWN AND OTHERS

- ***Ethnocentrism***: Ethnocentrism was defined by Sumner (1906) as “that view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it”.
- The attitude that our own culture is superior to others, that our own beliefs, values, and behaviors are more correct than others, and that other people and cultures can be evaluated in terms of our own culture is known as **ethnocentrism**
- ***Xenocentrism***
- The opposite of ethnocentrism is **xenocentrism**, the belief that what is foreign is best, that our own lifestyle, products, or ideas are inferior to those of others.
- ***Temporocentrism***
- The temporal equivalent of ethnocentrism is **temporocentrism**, the belief that our own time is more important than the past or future. Accordingly,

historical events are judged not in their own context but on the basis of contemporary standards. Our tendency toward temporocentrism leads us to assume that current crises are more crucial than those of other periods that problems need to be solved now before it is too late.

- **Cultural Relativism:**
- They attempt to view all behaviors, lifestyles, and ideas in their own context. The belief that cultures must be judged on their own terms rather than by the standards of another culture is **cultural relativism**.

### **Cultural Complexity and Diversity**

- *Subcultures*
- Most societies include groups who share some of the cultural elements of the larger society yet also have their own distinctive set of norms, values, symbols, and lifestyles. These units of culture are **subcultures**
- *Countercultures*
- A **counterculture** is a subculture that adheres to a set of beliefs and values that “rejects and opposes significant elements of the dominant culture of which it is a part”
- *Ideal and Real Culture*
- In most cultures, differences exist between what people are supposed to do and what they actually do. The **ideal culture** consists of the norms and values people profess to follow; the **real culture** is the culture they actually do follow.

### **SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

- Sociologists apply the term “social structure” to the interweaving of people’s interactions and relationships in more or less recurrent and stable patterns.

Social structure provides an organized and focused quality to our group experiences, and it allows us to achieve our collective purposes

- **Statuses**

- Sociologists employ status differently to mean a position within a group or society. By means of statuses we locate one another in various social structures. Mother, management trainer, friend, supervisor, female, elementary school principle

- **Types of Status: Ascribed and Achieved Statuses**

- Some statuses are assigned to us by our group or society and termed **Ascribed Statuses**. Age and gender are common reference points for the ascription of statuses.
- Other statuses we secure on the basis of individual choice and competition. We call these **Achieved Statuses**

- **ROLES**

- A status carries with it a set of culturally defined rights and duties. What sociologists term a **ROLE**. These expectations define the behaviour people view as appropriate and inappropriate for the occupant of a status. Quite simply, the difference between a status and a role is that we occupy a status and play a role.

- **Role Performance**

- In real life a gap often exists between what people should do and what they actually do. A role is the expected behaviour we associate with a status. Role performance is the actual behaviour of the person who occupies a status.

- **Role set**

- A single status may have multiple roles attached to it, constituting a role set. E.g. the status of student involves one role as a pupil, one role as a peer of other students, one role as a loyal supporter of your school's teams, one role as a user of the library, and one role as a good citizen of the college community.

- **Role conflict**
- Role conflict result when individuals are confronted with conflicting expectations stemming from their simultaneous occupancy of two or more statuses.
- **Role strain**
- Role strain occurs when individuals find the expectations of a single role incompatible, so that they have difficulty performing the role. The relationship physicians have with their patients provides an example

### **Reading Textbooks**

1. Essentials of Sociology: A brief introduction edited by Elias O. Wahab, Adebayo O. Fadeyi and Onipede Wusu
2. Sociology by Anthony Giddens 2013
3. Sociology: The Core. 5<sup>th</sup> edition by Hughes, Kroehler and Vander Zanden 1999
4. Sociology for Beginners edited by Lai Olurode and Omololu Soyombo 2001
5. Sociology: Themes and Perspectives by Haralambos and Holborn, 5<sup>th</sup> edition 2000
6. Internet-linked Dictionary of Sociology by Collins 2005
7. Gelles, R. J & Levine, A. (1996). *Sociology: An Introduction*. (6th edition.)
8. McGraw Hill Giddens, A. (1993). *Sociology: An introduction*. Polity Press in Association with Blackwell Publishers, (2nd edition.)